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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[MURDER WILL OUT.]

LADY JULIETTE'S SECRET.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Grand Court," "The Rose of Kendale," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XVII:

Friendship—to be two in one—

Let the canting liar pack!

Well I know when I am gone,

How she mouths beneath my back.

Tennyson.

AND now they are bound together for life, man and wife; each one has sworn before the altar of God, and in the presence of the minister, to be faithful unto death. It was singular that Juliette—great soul as she was—with her highly organised mind, noble heart, and lofty intellect, should have lent herself to such a mockery, all unconscious, as it seemed, of the awfulness of the step she had taken, in her eagerness to avoid the hated Sir Guildford, in her fear of the terrible prison house with which her guardian threatened her. Desiring ardently liberty, peace, and safety, freedom to pursue the peculiar bent of her philanthropic ideas, scope for her large benevolence, which embraced all humanity, it was singular, we repeat, that Juliette should have consented to barter away the love, the liberty, the very life in its fullest sense, of a man who had never offended her; and at the same moment to sacrifice all the sweet hopes of her own youth, all the natural aspirations which the Divine maker has planted in the breast of every true woman. She had just condemned a man of whom she knew nothing, save that he stood in need of money, to lead a life of celibacy, to go to his grave unloving and unloved; she had forbidden him to call another woman by the name of wife. Domestic ties were to be a blank for him, he was to be a homeless man.

Upon herself she had entailed the same privations; she was to go through life without any joys of her own, she was to spend her days in sacrifice and celibacy. The solemn marriage service, translated by her, meant simply this:

"I swear to you, Eugene Owen" (for under that

name she had married her husband) "that I will never love or cling to you, or to anybody else, that I will be faithful, not to you, but to my own philanthropic ideal, that I will not wait for death to part us, but that I part from you now myself, voluntarily, and at once, and for ever!"

It was in truth a horrible, mockery this marriage service, solemnised according to law, between the village schoolmaster and the earl's daughter.

Disguised as he was with his false moustache and wig, Fernandez was not recognised by the wife he had just married. Juliette, veiled and shrinking, had not once permitted him to see her face. She clung to the arm of Finette as she passed out of the church, the bridegroom following in the rear.

In the street stood a cab. Lady Juliette hastily entered it, and waved her hand in token of courteous though cold adieu. Eugene raised his hat, Finette entered the vehicle, and it drove away.

"Heaven and earth!" said Fernandez to himself, "to what have I pledged myself? Am I her husband, Juliette's husband, and am I never to seek her? never to speak to her? I shall go mad!"

But, suffer as he might, or rave as he would, there was in reality no alternative for Fernandez, so long as he retained possession of his senses, save to obey the conditions to which he had bound himself. To save his mother (or her whom he considered as his mother) from imprisonment, to save himself from disgrace lasting and bitter, with some wild hope that in joining himself to Juliette he should establish a tie between them which must ultimately draw him again into her presence, Fernandez had insanely allied himself to one from whom it was as wild to expect love or affection as it would have been from a throned and crowned queen. There was, we say again, no alternative for Fernandez, save to obey those conditions to which he had madly bound himself.

Two days afterwards he was again at Allonby, looking haggard and wild, but yet fulfilling all his every-day duties with a stoical calmness.

The village was still gossiping about the disap-

pearance of Lady Juliette. The days passed on gloomily, but, monotonous as were those days, Fernandez lived a life of feverish excitement. Constantly he was expecting a summons to the presence of his wife; daily he anticipated that Sir Guildford and Colonel Philbertson, who were still in London, would discover the hiding-place of Juliette, and that Finette would write to the address which he had left in London. Then all letters were to be forwarded to him to the country. But the summons came not, and it struck him that Finette might apply personally to the office in the city where he had given the name of Eugene Owen, and it was just possible that she might discover that the schoolmaster of Allonby and the man who had married Lady Juliette were one and the same.

Meanwhile, no summons came, and at last a hungry, restless longing to behold the face of Juliette took possession of the unhappy young man.

It was a gusty, gloomy afternoon in September. School was over, and Fernandez hung listlessly over the garden gate of Honeysuckle Cottage, smoking a cigar. Heavy clouds sailed low; the trees rocked their branches in the wind—the trees, already tinged by the first touch of autumn. Fernandez was looking along the dusty road, and wondering idly and dreamily how long the wind and rain would keep off. Presently he heard footsteps, and, looking up, perceived two gentlemen, who had evidently just arrived from the railway station. One he recognised at once—the handsome face and military swagger of Colonel Philbertson could not be mistaken; and the other was the stout, red-faced, bald-headed man who was to have married Lady Juliette. The pompous Sir Guildford and the haughty colonel had returned from London without having succeeded in capturing the runaways. Fernandez watched them out of sight. Each of them had honoured him with a stare in passing, and he had removed his cap from his head, with a gesture at once sulky and graceful. The two figures passed into the distance, and Eugene still remained leaning upon the gate. He smoked his cigar to the last; then he stamped out the ashes with his foot,

pulled his cap more over his eyes, buttoned his coat across his chest (for the evening was becoming chilly), and set forth upon one of his long rambles, wherein he tried to walk off the perturbation of his spirit, and by fatiguing his body managed sometimes to gain a night's repose.

The afternoon was indeed as dreary a one as ever over clouds the English landscape, and blots out its beauty, or, at least, dims its brightness. The season had been early, so the corn was all carried, and the long fields of stubble looked empty and lonely after the joyous thousands of whispering corn-ears had been sown down. There was a prelude of winter in the air that day, faint, distant, and half-defined, but still a presage. The woods seemed to have faded from the vivid green of June and July, and as yet they had not assumed the more gorgeous livery of golden October. Under that leaden sky, and moaned through by that complaining wind, those woods seemed no longer the same joyous glades, brilliant with sunshine, and musical with the song of birds, which had tempted the feet of Eugene in the springtime. He plunged into them, nevertheless. There was much accord that day between the gloom and restlessness of his own spirit and the mood in which changeful Dame Nature shewed herself in Allonby Woods. Eugene walked on. The rain did not fall down that night; the wind moaned, the trees beat about their branches, the leaves now and anon rustled in showers to his foot. He walked on. They stretch far and wide, those Allonby Woods; pathless are they, and there is a pleasure in wandering amid their depths, in the long, glad days of June; but this especial day, or rather evening, there was fascination, there was romance, there was a spirit in the air, there was a mystery in the approach of night; but there was no gladness. Night came on, and still Eugene was wandering in Allonby Woods. The moon came sailing through the sombre clouds, which hurried over the sky as though impelled with a purpose, or laden with a mission.

Eugene at last, fatigued with his impetuous walking, flung himself upon the ground, covered his eyes with his handkerchief, and sank into a deep, untroubled sleep. He was awakened out of a dream of battle, where he thought he had enlisted in the lines of the Prussians or French (he knew not which) in the confusion of his dream), by the report of a gun. He sat up, rubbed his eyes, and wondered if that were a real shot, or only the nervous vibrations of his own heated brain? Nay, surely, it was a real shot, and poachers were out in Allonby Woods. The moon was sailing now over a clearer space of blue; the clouds had rolled away; the night was still; the winds had sobbed themselves to sleep.

"Where did that shot come from?"

He listened again, and then he heard a groan, a terrible groan, as of one in mortal anguish, or in the last throes of the death-pang. Fernandez rose up, and walked swiftly towards the place from which the sound proceeded. Again he heard the groan, and, rushing towards the sound too impulsively, as was his wont, stumbled against the prostrate body of a man. The man groaned more piteously than before. Fernandez bent over him anxiously. All the compassionate tenderness of his really fine nature awoke within him. The moon at that moment shone out brilliantly from behind a fleecy white cloud which had obscured her light, and the features of the wounded man were at once recognised by the young schoolmaster. The once ruddy face was ghastly white; a cruel pistol shot had entered the side of the head, and a frightful wound, from which the blood was welling in a black stream, struck horror to the soul of Fernandez.

In a moment the terrible jeopardy in which he stood presented itself to his mind. Here he was, miles away from any respectable habitation, in the woods, with this gentleman who was, in all human probability, wounded to the very death. Would not anybody who met him, or who should hear from him the same story he had to tell of his midnight ramble, his sleep under the trees, his sudden awakening, doubt his veracity and accuse him as a murderer, or a would-be murderer? And the man—the man who was wounded, and lay panting out his life under the trees—who was he? Sir Guildford Owen, Baronet; he, the pompous, stout, and florid gentleman who was to have married Lady Juliette; he, the richest merchant prince in England. What a noise his death would make!

These thoughts surged through the brain of Fernandez while he was binding up the head of the unconscious baronet, as well as he was able. He ran to a little stream which was murmuring hard by. He filled his hat with water, returned at once, and dashed some over the pale, upturned face. Then he chafed the hands, put his hand to the heart, and felt for its beating.

While thus employed, an indescribable feeling of kindness towards the wounded man arose in the

proud, passionate heart of Fernandez. He yearned to save his life; every selfish desire for his own safety died out within him. Proud, pompous, and even ungenerous as Sir Guildford seemed when he visited the humble Allonby schoolroom—affianced, too, to Juliette, though bitterly against her will—Fernandez still could not find it in his heart to hate this person, whose unconscious head he actually was supporting against his breast.

All at once he heard the steps of some man approaching, crushing the last year's leaves under his strong heels. Another moment, and a terrible form stood out, clearly defined in the moonlight. It was a face which Eugene at once recognised—a face sudden and brutal, swollen by intemperance, overgrown with dark hair; the dress, the ragged smock and villainous cap, the torn nether garments and the bare feet, all looked as grim, ugly, and eloquent of crime, misery, hunger, and dirt as they had looked on the night when we first introduced the tramp to the reader in the opening chapter of this history.

The ferocious man pulled his beard and scowled, and Fernandez, watching him, felt convinced at once that he meant mischief. He was prepared then, when, with a wily and cunning spring, the fellow leaped upon him—not upon him exactly, but upon the strong white fists which Fernandez opposed to his approach. Instantly the two were engaged in deadly struggle. Sir Guildford lay moaning on the grass, while at the distance of less than five yards, the tramp and the schoolmaster fought, as fiercely as enraged dogs. Unhappily for Fernandez he lost his coolness for the first few minutes. He was so startled, so much amazed, so horrified, so fearful of worse coming to the prostrate, bleeding man, that he struggled and fought with more desperation than was needful.

The tramp was a powerful man, well skilled in the art of self-defence, and a consummate boxer. Eugene was equally skilled in the same art, for notwithstanding his foreign training, he had possessed in his stepfather, Fernandez, an unprejudiced protector, who desired to give him the advantages of a foreign education. Consequently, Fernandez had learned to swim, dive, row, box, and shoot from a rifle; also he could ride, drive, and wrestle—he had been accustomed to athletic exercises from his earliest youth. The middle-aged tramp, then, with his heavy limbs and iron clutch, was met by a wiry and slender antagonist, whose blows were as rapid, hard, and vigorous as his own.

Still for a while the advantage seemed to be on the side of the beggar. He hurled a fierce blow at Fernandez, which the young man parried, but presently came another, which struck him in the chest, and for a moment Fernandez reeled. Another instant and he lay prostrate upon the ground. The evil tramp was kneeling upon his chest now, and the wicked face was close to his own. There was a malicious grin upon the lip; the teeth were set, the eyes shone with a murderous glare. Face to face! It was a terrible moment!

There was complete silence in the woods; it was past the hour of midnight; the moon cast her calm, heavenly radiance upon that forest glade, where the spirit of murder—"wilful murder," as it is grimly and justly described in our law courts—was rampant.

The tramp meant to murder Fernandez. He had seen him once before, when the young man was conversing with the curate at the garden gate of Honeysuckle Cottage; he recognised the handsome face, he knew what danger there would be for him should the schoolmaster survive to tell the tale of the wounded Sir Guildford; and his murderous assailant, therefore, was resolutely bent upon killing him. His hands crept with snake-like motion towards the throat of Fernandez; one of them had just touched the smooth surface, when suddenly the strong white teeth of the young Spaniard fastened upon it.

It was a desperate, a mad effort, to save his own life, but a successful one. With vigorous determination, which suffered not his refined instincts to shrink from the horrible but necessary penance that was to save him from the jaws of death, Fernandez bit—bit hard; his teeth met in the hand of the would-be murderer. The effect was instantaneous. With a yell more like the roar of a wild beast, the tramp sprang up, and wrung his lacerated hand in the air. At once Fernandez was upon his feet, and engaged with him in deadly struggle.

This time rage and pain blinded the eyes of the beggar. He hit at random, he cursed and growled, and flung himself headlong at Fernandez. Then speedily the young man became the victor. He met the tramp with a rapid succession of hard knocks, and presently the man lay absolutely at his mercy, stunned by a well-aimed blow between the eyes. Then Fernandez drew a ball of cord from his pocket, which he kept for tying up books and parcels connected with the school and the vicarage. He now wound some, and proceeded

to tie the senseless man by the feet to a tree. This somewhat too hastily accomplished, he went over to Sir Guildford Owen, and looked at him anxiously. The unhappy man was silent and white as death. Fernandez put his hand again to the region of the heart; the breathing was so faint as to be scarcely perceptible.

Fernandez set off at the top of his speed towards Allonby. It was a long way under the circumstances, a distance of fully four miles, but the young man hastened on as for dear life through thicket and brake, and soon he was on the high road and anon skirting the fields; about an hour and a quarter from the time of leaving the wood and the two senseless men, he entered the street of the pretty village.

The moon was wanling, and the first faint streak of dawn was glimmering in the East. The first house he sought was the doctor's. There he rang them up, and speedily good Mr. Piper was encased in his dark brown suit and gray overcoat, for the morning was chilly, and the boy was roused and despatched to the stable, and even Mrs. Piper and good little Miss Piper came down, shivering in morning wrappers, and with faces pale from alarm and surprise.

Fernandez was ushered into the somewhat shabby, or at least well-used breakfast-room, while Jane, the cook, was in the kitchen, likewise roused from her slumbers before the legitimate hour of awakening, in order that she might light the fire and boil some coffee for the doctor before he started.

The news which Fernandez had brought was very exciting for a village like Allonby. Sir Guildford Owen—seconded the richest man in England, guest at Maberly, affianced to Lady Juliette, who had gone away in order to avoid him—Sir Guildford wounded perhaps to the very death, and lying at that moment unattended in Allonby Woods, in close proximity to the ruffian who had attacked him, was over case more horrifying? more surprising? Fernandez was sensible with a host of questions. What brought Sir Guildford in the woods at that hour? What had brought Mr. Fernandez there?

"I often pass the night in walking," replied he.

And then followed praise, and many eulogies on the part of Mrs. Piper and Miss Maria, for some few weeks back had not the honour of the young schoolmaster out for his midnight exercise, eccentric as he was considered, had not his great heroism in saving the children at the burning moor farm been passed in all the papers; and was there not on hand a small subscription in the village and neighbourhood to present him with a silver inkstand, emblematic of his valour?

The coffee came in, and Fernandez was invited to drink some. After that he had to go to the village station-house with Doctor Piper, and there departed in the doctor's carriage two stout policemen, Fernandez, and the worthy doctor himself. He was a little, hard-working man, with a face tanned red by sun, wind, and weather; his eyes twinkled kindly, his voice was pleasant.

It was impossible to bring the carriage farther than the outskirts of the wood. There the party descended, and made their way, led by Fernandez, to the spot where he had left the wounded man and the senseless tramp. They reached the tree where the tramp had been bound. He was gone; and it seemed that some comrade must have liberated him, for pieces, short pieces of the cord lay about upon the grass, which showed that it must have been hacked and hewed about by a knife, and the man could not have managed that himself. What of Sir Guildford?

"Thank Heaven, they have spared his life."

It was Doctor Piper who spoke. He was kneeling down now, with his honest, kindly face laid sideways on the breast of the wounded man; he was listening for his breathing.

"He is alive, and he will live," pronounced the doctor, when he had further examined the patient, "but he is terribly hurt about the head."

They proceeded to make a litter with boughs, for all had come provided with ponknives and string, and so the wounded man was lifted and carried to the carriage, and then the two policemen, having taken Fernandez's description of the tramp down in writing, set off in quest of him on foot. Fernandez and the doctor, with the patient, proceeded to Allonby.

It was singular that Fernandez's feelings towards Sir Guildford should have been so kind—we had almost said so tender—but there is an opinion held by some that if you do a person kindness, you straightway become attached to that person. It may have been so in this case, or it may not; but certain it is, that when the doctor's carriage stood before the stately terrace steps of Maberly Abbey, and the alarmed servants came out with scared faces into the morning sunshine to assist in lifting the wounded baronet into the house, Fernandez felt strangely tempted to linger, that he might hear of the welfare of this man whom he had rescued.

But it happened that there was nobody to invite him to enter. The colonel was not at home, neither was Mr. Mapleton. The colonel had returned from London, it seemed, the evening before, in company with Sir Guildford; the two had started, immediately after dinner, for the residence of a Captain Hungerford, a gentleman who had some connection with the European secret police. The seat of this person was at a distance of seven miles from Maberly. It was not known if the business which took the two gentlemen to Cranworth House was solely connected with Lady Juliette, or had anything to do with the political atmosphere of the Continent. Anyhow, the two friends started on horseback, and the colonel had not returned. Mr. Mapleton had been absent two days. Allonby Woods did not lie in the direction of Cranworth House, and for what reason Sir Guildford should have wandered out of his way was a question which puzzled the world at Maberly. Finally, Sir Guildford's massive gold watch, a diamond ring, and a purse, which his valet said contained twenty pounds, were gone. Fernandez had gathered all this news from the hasty talk of the confidential servants, but he was obliged to go away without any certain news concerning Sir Guildford Owen.

Meanwhile, the rich merchant was laid in the luxuriant bed that was appointed for him at Maberly; his valet attended him, while the doctor made every examination that was necessary. The result was as follows:—Severe wound in the head; bullet had penetrated the skull, though without wounding a vital part; inflammation of the brain imminent; another bullet had passed through the chest, and was lodged against the collar-bone. Extraction must be had recourse to at once, and forthwith the good surgeon proceeded to his task, for although he telegraphed to London for a great physician, and a great surgeon, the peril was great,—delay was death; and when the gentlemen arrived in the afternoon the operation was completed, and the patient sleeping calmly, though evidently when he awakened it would not be to consciousness.

The day waned, and the colonel had not returned; a messenger on horseback was despatched to Cranworth House by Mrs. Philbertson, whose calm, cold nature remained perfectly unruffled by the serious events that were in course of action round and about her. She wore blue satin at dinner, and pearl bracelets on her round, white arms; and while she did not know for certain if her husband had met with a like fate to the baronet, she wished in a tone of pique "that Miss Random would come down punctually when the gong sounded for dinner."

CHAPTER XVIII.

For how hard it seem'd to me then not to dare to see;
When thy low voice faltering would break its syllables,
To keep my own full tuned; hold passion in a leash,
And not leap and dash about thy neck. *Tennyson.*

FLORENCE RANDOM entered the dining-room with a languid air; of late nothing had transpired in the shape of amusement or excitement for this restless belle. There had been but few visitors at Maberly. There had been no one to flirt with, nothing to do, the colonel and Sir Guildford being in London, searching for the runaway Juliette; Mapleton, even, had been absent. As for the schoolmaster, whom Florence had been cruelly bent upon driving into a mad and hopeless passion for herself, he had been absent, or difficult to come at; she had not seen him once during the last fortnight. In fact, there had been nothing stirring.

Florence, however, never forgot to dress herself becomingly, even though there should be nobody present to fascinate. On this occasion she wore maize-coloured satin, with an over-skirt of costly black lace, diamonds upon her wrists and in her ears. She sank wearily into the soft cushion chair that was placed for her, and began to eat her dinner with apparently little appetite, although the table was laden with dainties.

There was silence between the two fashionable ladies during the repast. But as soon as the servants had withdrawn and they sat over their dessert, Florence said, languidly:

"Do the doctors think there is much chance of the recovery of Sir Guildford Owen?"

"They say he will not die," replied Mrs. Philbertson, calmly. "But it is probable the bullet, which has entered his chest and struck against his collar-bone, will be the means of crippling him for life. A man of Sir Guildford's age does not so easily recover from an accident of this sad description; he will never be the man he was before."

"There is a great chance, then," cried Florence, "that he will abandon this wretched and mad idea of marrying Lady Juliette. She would return if she knew that the danger was so nearly over."

It was some time before the lady spoke, then she said:

"Juliette has placed herself quite beyond the pale

of society by her foolish and unfeminine conduct. An earl's daughter hiding in London in company with her female attendant! Terrible!"

A faint flush stole over the pale, placid face of the proud woman. She was as much moved as it was possible for her to be under any circumstances. Presently she spoke again:

"Should Sir Guildford die, Juliette would be free; had she waited until the present time, the colonel and myself might have presented her at Court next spring; and although she has but about one hundred a year of her own, she is so pretty and so well born there is no doubt she might have made a brilliant marriage. As it is, should she even return and submit herself, she will be, of course, compelled to pass the remainder of her life in seclusion. Neither the colonel nor myself can ever think of introducing her anywhere."

"It is what she will rejoice in," cried Florence. "Juliette desires nothing save seduction. Juliette is far more saint than sinner, Mrs. Philbertson; and those who have known the poor, enthusiastic child would answer for her with their lives." Here Miss Florence spoke with vehemence, "that the time of her sojourn in London has been passed much in church, but mostly among the poor."

"Why did you not say that before?" cried Mrs. Philbertson. "Here have the colonel and Sir Guildford been wasting their time searching for Juliette in improbable places, when, had they sought among the ragged schools, they would have found her buried in some of her works of ridiculous charity."

"Depend upon it," said Florence, coolly, "she will return in a few days, when she has read in the newspapers an account of the murderous attack on Sir Guildford Owen, of his probable death, and of the certainty that he can never be other than a cripple, even should he recover."

"But that is not certain," cried Mrs. Philbertson.

"Nevertheless I would have it so stated in the papers," cried Florence. "It will be a bait that will draw my Lady Juliette home."

Mrs. Philbertson sipped a little amber-coloured wine from the small crystal glass beside her, and then thoughtfully leaning her cheek upon her fair, plump hand, acknowledged within herself that Florence was a very clever girl.

Coffee had been carried into the blue drawing-room, and the lamp lighted, when a loud knocking was heard at the front door. Mrs. Philbertson, who did not know whether or not her husband was killed, scarcely changed colour or moved an inch when the summons came. Florence was not so calm. She rose up impulsively, and then the martial tread of the colonel was heard on the stairs. He was alive and well. A calm observer, not specially interested in the colonel and his family, a keen, cool scrutiniser of human nature, had such been in the blue drawing-room, might have observed a look of anxiety, almost of terror, on the handsome face of Colonel Philbertson. His greetings were hurried, but polite; he shook his wife's hand, and lightly kissed her on her calm forehead; he established himself upon the hearth-rug, after having bowed to Miss Random.

"So you are not killed; not shot through the heart?" said Florence, brusquely.

"Evidently not," he returned, trying to smile. "I was out riding when the messenger arrived, and on my return was perfectly horrified at the news."

"But how did you separate from Sir Guildford?" asked Florence, impetuously. "You both started together for Cranworth House. How did you separate? How did all this come about?"

"On this wise," said the colonel, making a great effort to speak calmly. "He had hardly left the entrance gate of Maberly, when a man came dashing on horseback along the high-road after us. He called out: 'Gentlemen, stop, pray! Do not I address Sir Guildford Owen?' Sir Guildford answered: 'Yes,' whereupon the man drew from his pocket a letter, which he presented to Sir Guildford. Sir Guildford took it, tore open the envelope, drew out the letter, read it, and then, looking fixedly at the man, he said: 'I'll come with you at once.' He hardly apologised to me for leaving me. He only said: 'This business is more important to me than my visit to Cranworth.' He then rode off immediately, in company with this strange messenger, leaving me somewhat mystified but still more annoyed at his remarkably rude behaviour. I rode on to Cranworth, where, I regret to say, that my inquiries concerning Juliette met with no result so far. You may imagine my horror when I received the message this afternoon—the news that Sir Guildford had been wounded almost to the death. Tell me, is it as bad as it first appeared?"

"Three doctors have been with him to-day," replied Mrs. Philbertson; "they all pronounced him in great danger. Sir Richard Emlyn will return from London the day after to-morrow. Meanwhile this man, Piper, the village doctor, is very assiduous,

and the London physicians pronounce him very competent. He sent us in a nurse, a Mrs. Rugby, who appears indefatigable in her attentions."

Was Florence mistaken, or did a scowl of disappointment contract the brow of the colonel for a moment? He frowned down upon the costly hearthrug and muttered to himself two words: "Baffled! Always!" Presently he looked up again, and spoke more rapidly.

"Then he has been robbed; Sir Guildford has been robbed?" he asked. "They tell me downstairs that his watch and his money are gone. It is, then, a deliberate and vulgar burglary, though carried out with considerable skill. But give me the particulars. Who discovered him in Allonby Woods?"

"Fernandez, the schoolmaster," replied Florence. "The woman of the world was annoyed to find that she could not pronounce the name of the humble schoolmaster without a tingling blush making her fair cheek hot for a moment.

"It is that I am so much annoyed at his self-sufficient manner," she said to herself.

Then she went on aloud, giving the colonel an account of the midnight wandering of the schoolmaster; of his having fallen asleep in Allonby Woods; of his having been awakened by a shot; and then she went on to state that Fernandez had discovered the senseless, bleeding body of Sir Guildford; that immediately after there had appeared on the spot an evil-looking man, clothed in rags, whom Fernandez recognised as the beggar who appeared in the village some weeks previously. She went on to give an account of the struggle which had ended in the victory of Fernandez, who had bound the tramp to a tree, after which he had hastened to the village, whence he had returned with Doctor Piper and two strong policemen. Sir Guildford had met with no further hurt, but the tramp had escaped.

"And do you absolutely believe this story?" inquired the colonel. "What was this man, Fernandez, doing in the woods at night? Depend upon it he has Sir Guildford's watch and money safely stowed away. He is a cunning Spaniard. I shall have him taken up on suspicion."

Florence was more than ever amazed at the flood of indignation which stirred within her at that moment. She felt that she could have struck the colonel.

"How dare you, sir," she asked, passionately, "bring such a charge against a respectable and industrious young man, simply because he is poor? You forget it is probable Sir Guildford may recover his senses, and, if so, he can at once accuse Fernandez, if Fernandez be guilty. How would he have run the risk of this were he the robber? Would he have brought the doctors and the constables to Allonby Woods? would he have let himself appear in the matter? For shame, Colonel Philbertson!"

"Miss Random," cried Mrs. Philbertson, "may I entreat you to measure your words by a more lady-like standard when you address Colonel Philbertson?"

Again a strange feeling shot across the heart of Florence, reckless coquette, heartless belle, woman of the world, as we have styled her. How was it that she felt inclined to apologise to these haughty Philbertsons—she who a few weeks back would have packed up her things, summoned her maid, and quitted the house, on far less provocation? It was such a dull house, too. The illness of Sir Guildford and the absence of Lady Juliette would make it a place of anxiety and seclusion for a long while to come. Florence had many invitations to visit at livelier houses—what was the fascination that held her so tightly to Maberly? She was alarmed on discovering that it was the interest she took, half angry, half admiring, wholly new and absorbing, in the somewhat morose young schoolmaster, Eugene Fernandez. She made her apologies quickly, and hastened to her room—there to pace up and down, and to wonder whether this strange tide of events was bearing her and all connected with her.

"I think this Fernandez is a hateful person," said Florence to herself, actually speaking aloud that she might give the more emphasis to her own thoughts, and convince herself she felt as she wished to feel. "He ought to be punished for his presumption and conceit, and I, for his own good—"

Here she twisted one of her golden curls round her fingers, and smiled a vain, self-confident smile at herself in the glass.

"I will take upon myself to punish him, to take his conceit out of him; it will do him a great deal of good in the end. But meanwhile I do not like to hear him falsely accused of a mean, despicable crime. I will protest him from such injustice. I will go to him to-morrow and warn him. Yes, I will go to him, and I will make myself very agreeable to him. I will permit him to hope,—here the belle tossed her head coquettishly—"that he has a chance of overcoming his aristocratic scruples. I will tell him

how bitterly I regret the absence of Juliette since the punctilious and detestable Mrs. Philbertson has not permitted me to take my Spanish lessons without an elderly lady being in the room, and since I don't like elderly ladies I have not taken any lessons. Oh, I will tell him a great many things."

Soon after this Florence retired to rest. The next morning she was awake, and dressed early; she went out on the flowered lawns and wandered from them among the cedar-trees.

There was a path among these said cedar-trees which wound down to a delicious little brook that went murmuring over golden sands and white pebbles for a distance of two miles across the grounds, until it emptied itself into a large fish-pond at the farther end of the park.

It was a lovely September morning, there was that freshness, that rich fragrance in the air which fills the senses with an indescribable ecstasy, and seems to promise better and brighter things than this world has to offer.

Florence sank upon a low garden-chair, resting her feet upon the rich emerald turf. Below ran and prattled the brook, above the tall cedars whispered in the perfumed breeze. Glancing upward, Florence could see glimpses of deep blue sky between the tossing boughs.

"Ah," said Florence to herself, "I wonder if it is altogether a false dream, that dream of love in a cottage."

She uttered the words aloud. She was unconscious of the presence of a listener. At that moment a step sounded on the soft, thick grass; immediately afterwards Mapleton, the mysterious, stood before Florence Random. We have already stated that this personage had been absent on his own business for some days; he had returned early, however, that morning, and had attended to his toilette before presenting himself to Florence. He was scrupulously dressed, his linen was spotless, his hair and moustache well arranged, the cut of his clothes was good, and he made no vulgar display of jewellery, only a rich diamond glistened on his finger, and a heavy gold pin fastened his stock, and yet Florence, looking at him, with all his fashionable attire and self-satisfied air, recognised him at that moment more distinctly than ever as the very tramp who had robbed her and Lady Juliette several weeks back. Quick to surmise and correct in her judgment, the clever Florence settled it at once in her own mind that the assailant of Sir Guildford and this man who called himself Mapleton, and was a guest at the colonel's house, were one and the same person.

"I hope I see Miss Random well," said Mapleton, "and yet I need not ask; the richest health blooms on that lovely cheek, happiness and wit sparkle in those magnificent eyes."

Florence bowed coldly.

"I am very well, Mr. Mapleton," she said.

Now Eugene Fernandez had not forgotten to tell Doctor Piper how he had severely bitten the hand of the murderous tramp.

"Your left hand is wounded, Mr. Mapleton," she said, pointedly.

It was the same hand on which glistened the large diamond ring. A broad strip of sticking-plaster was laid across the fleshy part of the thumb.

Mapleton's coarse, dark face grew red under the scrutiny of Florence.

"I burnt my hand at my friend's house," he said.

"Burnt your hand," echoed Florence. "I should have said it was a bite."

She looked at him fixedly, and now his face blanched to an ashen whiteness, a gleam of deadly ferocity kindled in his eyes, and mingled with the burning admiration which they expressed for Florence—love and hatred in one glance.

He schooled himself to speak quietly.

"I have not been engaged in any affray with dogs," he said, "nor have I been fighting with wild beasts."

"But you have been bitten on the hand," said Florence, provokingly, and she smiled a smile of bitter scorn.

"I beg your pardon, I told you I had been burnt," replied Mapleton.

"I know you told me so," answered Florence, "but I only place faith in the statements of my friends."

"You are insulting, madam," cried Mapleton, in a voice inarticulate from rage.

"I do not care or know whether it be so or not," returned Florence. "I assure you I have no scruples whether I insult you or not."

She rose to her feet as she spoke, and was preparing to walk away when he interrupted her by coming to stand right before her. A less courageous woman would almost have fainted with fear in finding herself confronted with so furious and savage a countenance; but Florence was brave as a lioness.

"Will you give me a reason for your wish to insult me?" hissed forth Mapleton.

"Oh, I will give you several," retorted Florence.

"You are a person for whom I have conceived a most emphatic and decided dislike. I have met you here as a guest, and I should have been obliged to submit to the rules of conventional politeness, and to talk about the weather and the journals, and to wish you good morning and good evening, had you conducted yourself as a gentleman. But you have behaved like a housebreaker dressed in fashionable clothes, you have presumed to pay me odious compliments and to follow me about; henceforth I refuse to speak to you at all. If you speak to me you will receive what you deserve—insults."

Mapleton trembled with rage from head to foot, a deadly gleam shot from his eyes, and he hissed through his clenched teeth:

"No one yet has ever defied me with impunity. Beautiful demon, weeks and weeks ago I made up my mind to conquer you. You shall suffer for this, some day. You shall be my bride, for all your pride, and haughtiness, and insulting cruelty. I am not a young man—I am forty-five, I have seen a great deal of the world, men and women, fashionable men and women, aristocratic, refined, and haughty as yourself, but I never loved one of these women as I love you. If ever I set my heart on a thing I gain it, no matter what it costs, and I am determined to gain you. The time will come when you will sue to me for mercy, kneel humbly at my feet, and implore my forgiveness for these bitter insults."

"Sir, these are threats," cried Florence. "The law will protect me from you, and something tells me that you would have a great deal of fear if you found yourself within its clutches. However, set your cowardly heart at rest—I despise you far too much to be afraid of you; I can protect myself; only keep away from me, and be assured that under no circumstances could I regard you with any other feelings than those of the strongest abhorrence."

She had said her say, and now springing aside lightly, she threaded her way along the narrow path that led among the cedars to the lawn.

Enraged as Mapleton was he did not dare to follow her; it was too near the house to attempt any violence. He had it in his heart almost to rush after her and strangle her on the spot. As it was, he vowed a wicked vow in his wicked heart.

"If she never marries me," said he, "she shall never marry any one else; nay, more than that, she shall never enjoy her monopoly of freedom, and go about the world in the insolence of liberty, without father, mother, uncle, aunt, or guardian to control her, as she does now, unlike all other women, who while they are young and beautiful have always either husbands, or parents, to restrain them. I will spoil her sport," continued Mapleton, viciously. "Toss your head, my lady, and rejoice while you are able. Your reign, I can safely promise you, will be very short."

Florence saw scarcely anything of Mapleton for the next few days.

Meanwhile the account of Sir Guildford's accident had been put into the *Times*, nor was it without its effect on Lady Juliette.

One evening Fernandez, having dismissed his scholars, partaken of his tea, attended to his toilette with a little more care than usual, he hardly knew why, wandered down to Mr. Clemenham's, intending to converse with him on the merits of some Greek author whom he was studying—for at this time he had formed the wise resolve of occupying his mind fully and completely with study, hoping thus to drive away painful and burning thoughts.

On arriving at the house he was informed that Mr. Clemenham was at the rectory, but was expected home at any moment. Fernandez, who knew the visits of the curate to the vicar were never very long ones, was not afraid to enter the house, to seat himself in the library, and there to turn over sundry heavy volumes of ancient lore.

Suddenly there came a ring to the bell. He started up and rushed into the passage, expecting to meet the curate. But his heart stood still with amazement. The hall-door was open—he could see the garden, and the branches waving about in the breeze; the moon was rising behind a tall acacia; there was a sort of weird, unearthly glamour over everything—and there, between the twilight and the moon, stood the figure of the wife he adored, but dared not claim—Lady Juliette!

(To be continued.)

ARCHBISHOP MANNING has given orders to the priests in the Roman Catholic diocese of Westminster to declare that it is heresy to doubt or reject the dogma of Papal infallibility. The announcement was made "on authority," that "the definitions of the Council required no other publication than the solemn act by which the Holy Father had already published them to the universal church." The Liberal party in the Romish Church is thus

placed in a painful position; but it does not appear that any resistance is contemplated.

SCIENCE.

IT is proposed by Mr. J. Absterdam to unite cast steel or Bessemer steel or case-hardened wrought iron, either by pouring the molten cast or Bessemer steel against plates or slabs of blistered steel or case-hardened wrought iron, or he heats the bar of cast or Bessemer steel to a yellow heat, and the bar of cement, steel, or case-hardened wrought iron to a welding heat, and places them one on top of the other under a suitable press capable of exerting a pressure over the entire surface of the bars, and by this pressure the two metals are firmly united.

IN hydrogen gas the diamond can be heated nearly to the point of fusion of platinum without undergoing any change; it rather increases than diminishes in lustre. In carbonic acid it loses slightly in polish and weight, and the resulting gas contains carbonic oxide and oxygen; the carbonic acid is not decomposed by the diamond, but by the white hot platinum, and the loss of weight in the diamond is due to partial oxidation.

SOME years ago several scientific men endeavoured to show that a photograph of the impression remaining upon the retina after death might prove a valuable aid in the detection of murder. The subject has just been fully re-investigated by M. Verneuil, and he has proved that before the body is quite lifeless all power of sight has left the retina, and that therefore this plan is of no value.

THE THAMES EMBANKMENT.—Whatever claims Sir Christopher Wren may possess to be considered the originator of the Thames Embankment, it is hardly fair to leave out of sight those which belong to Sir John Kiviet. The latter gentleman was a refugee from Rotterdam, who came to England in 1666, and possessed some of the ingenuity of his brother-in-law, Admiral Von Tromp. It does not appear how soon after the Fire of London it occurred to Sir John to propose a river embankment, but as early as 2nd December, 1666, we find him examining the soil of the foreshores, with a view to discovering whether it was suitable for making clinker-bricks. On the 6th of March following, Evelyn definitely proposed to the Lord Chancellor, "Monsieur Kiviet's undertaking to warf the whole river of Thames, or Key it from the Temple to the Tower, as far as the fire destroyed, with brick, without piles, both lasting and ornamental." We may presume it was favourably received by Lord Clarendon, as upon the 23rd of the same month, Evelyn had audience of the king with reference to building the quay, and a few days later Sir John Kiviet and the Diarist "went in search for brick earth in order to a great undertaking." No further mention is made of the scheme, and we may, perhaps, conclude that it was abandoned either on account of the unpopularity of the inventor (whose Dutch extraction would at that time have been a natural bar to success), or of the fall of Clarendon, at the ignominious close of the war with Holland. At any rate, Kiviet has some right to divide the honours with Wren, though, in view of the work just completed, we cannot regret that its execution was reserved for our own times.

THE SNIIDER REDIVIVUS.

THE Government are manufacturing Snider rifles at Enfield, and have contracts with the Birmingham and London Small Arm Companies for their arms. The gun was originally adopted as a makeshift, and as a makeshift it is now being made, the excuse being, after two years of most successful experiments with Martini-Henry, that there is no time to manufacture this latter arm. The Snider may possess a better breech action than the Chassepot, but it is inferior to the latter in range and accuracy, just as the Chassepot is superior to the needle-gun in this respect. The Prussians say the Chassepot kills quite as far as the needle-gun. The efficiency of our troops is being sacrificed to make good Mr. Cardwell's statement of the 300,000 breech-loaders in store.

Is there not in this country sufficient engineering skill and energy to manufacture, outside of the two small arm companies a sufficient number of efficient Martini-Henries to at least arm our Volunteers, so that they may make up for what they lack in experience by the excellence of the arm with which they are to fight?

As matters now stand, in spite of the war in which she is now engaged, it is not improbable Prussia will be armed with the Martini-Henry before we are, and that we shall find that we have expended thousands of pounds in experiments, of the results of which other governments eagerly avail themselves, while we go on making an arm which we have been at much cost and pains to prove is inferior to another arm, which others we do not manufacture, simply because to do so would be to depart from the groove in which certain factories run.



MONTROSE: OR, THE RED KNIGHT.

CHAPTER XVI.

Wise men ne'er wail their present woes,
But presently prevent the ways to wail.
To fear the foe, since fear oppresteth strength,
Gives, in your weakness, strength unto your foe;
And so your follies fight against yourself.

Fear, and be slain; no worse can come to fight.

King Richard II.

DOUGLAS ruminated for some time upon their apparently desperate fortunes, his thoughts meanwhile growing more and more gloomy, but with an effort he shook them off, and sought the esquire.

"Come, Bertram," he said, "you and I will seek a little rest; for, if I mistake not, we shall have our hands full on the morrow."

Bertram willingly acceded to this proposition; and having given direction that they should be called in case of the discovery of any new movement on the part of the enemy, they retired to rest.

When Douglas awoke the sun was up, and, hastily arranging his dress, he went out into the court, where he found Bertram superintending the erection of temporary staging for the archers. He kept on to the tower of the barbican, whence he looked down into the vale at the foot of the mountain.

Alas! what a scene! A dense, black cloud hung over the spot where the town had stood—hung over a heap of shapeless, smouldering ruins! Of all the dwellings and public buildings of Lystra not one was left standing, and the teeming life that had erst reposed so quietly there was replaced by horrible destruction. To the north of this scene of smoking desolation were gathered the Moslem forces; but they were not under arms. Some of the men were stretched upon the ground; some seemed to be eating; while others were gathered into groups, as though for consultation.

"They do not seem to be in a hurry to attack us," remarked a soldier who stood near.

Douglas was startled from a painful reverie.

"No," he said. "I do not think the party which is to attack the castle has yet appeared. Keep a strict watch, my good man, and give immediate notice of any new movement."

With this, Douglas descended to the court, and re-entered the keep, where he found the countess and Isabel anxiously awaiting his appearance. He told them what he had seen, and spoke of the preparations that had been made for defence.

[THE ENEMY AT WORK.]

"How many men have we who can bear arms?" asked Lady Montrose.

"We have two hundred able men—men who can be counted upon for stern duty—and then there are others who can help. There are boys who can make themselves useful in distributing arms and in bearing messages. On the whole, I compute my garrison to be equal to the strength of two hundred and fifty men."

"If there are any boys who are strong enough to handle the cross-bow," said Isabel, "let them be stationed at the defences. The women will take their places in waiting upon the soldiers. I think there will be work enough for all."

Douglas had taken Isabel's hand, and was upon the point of complimenting her upon her spirit of devotion to the general interest, when he was interrupted by a messenger, who entered abruptly and unannounced.

"Sir Robert, you are wanted without!"

"What is it?" demanded the countess.

But the messenger was gone; and the knight quickly followed him.

In the court Douglas met the esquire.

"What is it, Bertram?"

"Come up here, Sir Robert!"

And the faithful henchman led the way to the top of the tower upon the northern bastion, and, pointing with his finger, requested the knight to look.

Douglas did so, and beheld a scene that startled him. Away up the valley, just coming into sight around the slope of a high hill, he saw an army of fully five hundred men, and at the head rode a knight in full armour. But this was not all. Behind this force came more than a hundred horses, dragging huge engines of war, among which could be distinguished three wooden towers for archers and the framework of a heavy battering-ram.

"Sir Robert," spoke Bertram, slowly and solemnly, "the worst is coming; and it is worse than I had even feared."

The youthful knight was for a moment silent. Then he looked up, and grasped his companion's hand.

"Bertram, you know our men. Will they stand by us?"

"I can answer for most of them."

"Then we can but do and die! We will face the foe, and trust in Heaven!"

On his way back to the keep Douglas stopped and meditated. Should he tell the ladies all his fears? or should he bid them hope where there was no hope? He was not long in doubt. The countess and Isabel, and Margaret Ramsey, had shown themselves

brave and determined, and he would keep nothing from them. If they knew the worse—and they must know it ere long—they would be prepared.

So he entered the hall, and, to a question from Isabel, he made answer by telling what he had seen.

"Five hundred men, said you?" cried the countess, in alarm.

"There must be fully that number, lady. I saw the column upon the slope of the hill, and every man was in view."

"And you saw towers and battering-rams?"

"Yes. They have brought them down from Gaza, and must have taken them from the stores of Bohemond. But I believe the prince knows nothing of it."

"And if they set these towers up against our walls—"

"Hush, lady! Let us not anticipate."

"But the knight who leads this host—did you see his pennon?"

"Yes."

"It is Jasper St. Julien!" cried Isabel, as her lover hesitated, and quivered.

"It is none other."

"Then," said the countess, putting away all show of fear, "let him come and do his worst. Our work is plain before us, Sir Robert; you know what must be the result if we should be overcome."

"I know, lady; and I will do my best. Look you to preparations for taking care of the wounded, while I summon our men."

When Douglas reached the main court he found the men-at-arms, save such as were on the watch, all assembled under the esquire; and he counted one hundred and forty of them, which, added to those on duty, made a total of one hundred and sixty-four. The knight himself was in complete armour, and by his directions Bertram had donned a suit of the earl's mail, so that he, too, wore a knightly guise; and right well he became it. In stature he was fully equal to him who had formerly worn it; and none could question his bravery.

While the men-at-arms were securing their breast-plates and back-pieces, Douglas went again to the tower for observation. The host—a motley mixture of Franks and Moslems—had stopped upon the plain between the smoking ruins of Lystra and the base of the eminence upon which the castle stood, and were engaged in bringing their portable towers to the front. Presently afterwards he observed a herald riding up the hill. He waited until the messenger had reached the moat and sounded his trumpet, then he descended, and, in company with Bertram, went out upon the parapet of the barbican.

"Sir herald, what seek ye?" he demanded.
"I bear a message to the commander of this castle," was the reply.

And our hero knew the man to be one of the heralds of the Norman Vikern.

"I am the commander."
"Then thou art Sir Robert Douglas, Marquis of Doon?"

"I am."
"My message is to thee. I come from Sir Jasper St. Julien, the true lord of this domain; and listen ye to his demand, which I do truly bear, and as truly announce!"

And thereupon the herald, in the quaintly verbose and grandiloquent style of the times, delivered him self of his message, which amounted to this: Jasper St. Julien demanded a surrender of the castle and all that it contained; and on his part he promised that if such an surrender were immediately made, and the gates thrown open to him, he would allow all non-combatants who had sought shelter there to go free; he would accept the services of the men-at-arms in the cause which he had espoused; while the household, including the Ladies Belinda and Isabel, and the maid Margaret Ramees, together with Sir Robert Douglas and Bertram of Montrose, were to be his prisoners, to be dealt with as he should thereafter determine. This the herald delivered, and then awaited the answer.

Sir Robert's impulse was to send back defiance at once; but he bethought him that those who must help him to do the fighting had a right to speak, and he bade the herald wait while he consulted with those under his command. Then he went down into the court, where the men-at-arms were ministered, and told them the demands of Jasper St. Julien.

"You, my men," he said, "are to join the ladies ranks, and your noble countess and the gentle Isabel are to be given into the hands of this base wretch as prisoners. What answer will you return to him?"

"We will die, if need be, in defence of the castle!" spoke an officer of the guard.

"We will die true to the Cross and Montrose!" added another.

To this all assented with loud acclamation.

Then Douglas went back to the barbican, and addressed the herald:

"Bear back to Jasper St. Julien, for answer, that we will defend the castle to the last. If he wants it, he must come and take it. And may Heaven defend the right!"

The herald rode away, and in half an hour afterwards a general movement was observed on the part of the enemy. The great wooden towers, mounted on wheels, were set in motion, and the framework of the battering-ram was made ready for transportation up the slope.

It was now near noon, and Douglas ordered dinner to be served; after this he gathered his forces for use as they might be needed.

Meantime the enemy, with the help of more than a hundred horses, had dragged the towers to within bow-shot of the walls, and had gone back after the ram. They worked slowly and methodically, evidently under the guidance of skilful engineers.

During all this time the stout men-at-arms of the castle could only look on without the power to prevent or to hinder. None of the enemy came within reach of their arrows, and to have made a sally would have been simply suicidal.

So the day wore away; and when the sun went down the three towers had been drawn up and set against the northern wall of the castle, and the battering-ram had been put together complete, save the hanging of the ponderous beam. These towers were of square frame-work, fully thirty feet high, with two platforms upon each, and each platform capable of accommodating thirty men. Thus each tower, when set in position, would elevate sixty archers above the castle walls, at the same time affording the protection of a breastwork of stout steel netting.

As the night began to fall Douglas saw that the besiegers were making ready to move their towers up to the moat; and he saw, furthermore, that sufficient shelter was afforded to the men who were to work them. What could he do? He called the wisest and best of his soldiers into council, and asked their advice. He was ready to do anything that promised help, even to sallying forth, and attacking the enemy hand to hand. But this was not to be thought of. All they could do was to watch and wait, and defend themselves when a direct attack should be made.

All night long the enemy were at work putting their engines in position, and all night long the watchmen upon the walls of the castle heard the groaning and creaking of the slowly moving masses, and saw the tall, gaunt towers, like giant spectres in the gloom, drawing nearer and nearer; and they could do nothing to prevent them.

At length the morning dawned, and Sir Robert's stout heart sank when he beheld the situation. The three towers had been set upon the moat, within a dozen yards of the walls, and were filled with archers, who, from their elevated positions, could look down into the court. And between two of these towers, at a point where the wall was weakest, the ram had been set, and the ponderous oaken beam, armed with a head of iron weighing fully a ton, had been hung in its place, and the long leading ropes attached.

A season of almost breathless suspense, and then the battle commenced. A shower of arrows came from the towers, and the men of the castle answered. Douglas had fire-balls prepared, which were cast upon the towers; but they proved of no avail, as the enemy had men enough to extinguish them as fast as they fell.

It was very soon evident that the men upon the castle walls were the best archers; but their archery availed them little, since the place of every man they shot was quickly filled by another, while the falling of a man within left a vacancy which could not be filled. Douglas and Bertram were present where they were most needed, now handling the crossbow, and soon clearing those who grew weak and faltered.

By-and-by a hundred men of the enemy began to move the huge battering-ram nearer to the wall. Douglas called fifty of his archers to the spot; but the missiles from two of the besieging towers were turned upon them, and the ram was advanced. Then the long ropes were led out along the hill-side, and men and horses were set to draw the ponderous beam. At a given point the key was knocked out that secured the ropes to the shaft, and the huge mass of iron swung back against the wall with a crash that made the whole castle quiver. The men-at-arms gathered at that point, and discharged their arrows and javelins upon those who worked the ram; but as most of them were protected by long shields of metal, the resistance did not materially disable the breaching party.

At this juncture the countess and Isabel, who had felt the shock of the huge engine, came into the court; but Douglas urged them to go back into the keep.

"We may as well die here—die with our brave and devoted defenders," said Lady Montrose; "for we know that all is lost."

"All is not lost while there is life," cried Bertram, who had at that moment come up. "Remember the Red Knight of Saint John! If he find you alive, be sure he will save you! Go back into the keep, and pray for us."

"Ah, Bertram," said Douglas, after the ladies had gone, "you said that to inspire them with groundless hope. What can the mystic knight now do for us?"

"For us, Sir Robert, perhaps nothing; but if the countess and her child live, be sure he will find them. Ha!"

The esquire's exclamation was caused by a second shock of the battering-ram, and upon hastening to the spot they found that several seams had been opened in the wall, and that large pieces of stone had been knocked out. It was plain to be seen that another shock would open a breach; and the knight knew that it was beyond his power to prevent it. By stationing his men to pick off those who worked the engine he only exposed them to the merciless shower of bolts from the towers, and that, too, hopelessly. His last resort was to gather his remaining force, and stand by to defend the breach when it should be made. Mustering his men, he found that he had less than a hundred left fit for duty. These laid aside their bows, and took the sword and the pike. They knew that surrender now would avail them nothing, and they were determined to fight to the last. They had not long to wait for the occasion.

The crash came again, and this time the wall was broken in, and the ponderous head of the ram came swinging through the breach. There was a demoniac shout of exultation from without, while those within braced themselves for the work. Douglas sprang to the opening as soon as the ram had been withdrawn, and cut down two traitorous Franks who had mounted the broken wall. For a time it seemed as though his single arm would hold the pass; but he was at length driven back by numbers, the close-fitting plates of his armour turning aside at least a hundred arrows that had been aimed at him.

On came the enemy, pouring through the breach by scores, and the Christians fell slowly back, fighting and falling—fighting and falling—growing less and less, while the numbers of the foe increased! Douglas had not yet been wounded, and while he defended himself, he watched for the coming of Jasper St. Julien through the breach, being resolved that he would strike down the villain if he had the strength. But the traitorous knight came not that way. Others came—hundreds of them—and

Douglas and Bertram, as though singled out for some ulterior fate, were pressed back towards the keep, themselves alone left of all their companions in arms.

At length a loud blast from the horn at the gate arose above the din in the court, and shortly afterward Jasper St. Julien, accompanied by the Emir Marouf, and several other warriors of distinction, entered through the opened portal.

Douglas saw them, and with a sinking heart turned and staggered into the hall. He was weak and faint from severe toil and many blows; and that those blows had been heavy was shown by the deep scars and indentations upon his armour. In the hall he met the countess and Isabel, and with them were many of the women and children who had sought shelter in the castle. He stopped when he saw the ladies, and leaned against a pillar for support.

"Robert!" cried Isabel, when she saw him falter, at the same time springing forward and looking up into his pale face, "you are hurt!"

"Not in body, dearest. I do not think I am wounded. But, alas!—"

"We know. All is lost! But faint not, dear Robert. We saw you in the breach."

"I have fought, lady; but I have not fought alone. Our men have fallen; and if you would know how they fell, go to the battle-ground, and you will find two of the enemy dead for every one of your own men-at-arms."

The countess had moved forward, and was upon the point of speaking, when Jasper St. Julien, accompanied by a score of stout soldiers, entered the hall. He stopped when he saw the company before him, and a triumphant smile was upon his dark face.

"Sir Robert Douglas," he said, "you are my prisoner. Are you afraid?"

The young Scot, with a deep groan, folded his arms across his breast.

"Your sword, Sir Robert."

"My sword is in the court, broken, and cast away."

Thus Douglas spoke, huskily and sullenly; but, remembering what was the part of a true knight when fairly overcome, and, also remembering how worse than useless any display of impotent temper must be, he quickly added, in a dignified manner:

"My sword is useless for evermore; but I am overcome, and I yield me your prisoner."

"And you, Bertram?—By my life, but thou looked bravely, and right knightly, in the earl's armour. Didst ever wear kingly armour before?"

"Ay, Sir Jasper—heavier armour than this," answered the esquire, promptly.

"Upon my soul, but thou art a fanciful knave But tell me—dost yield thee?"

"I do."

St. Julien waved his hand to his followers, and they took the two prisoners under their charge.

Then St. Julian turned towards the countess.

"My noble lady," he said, addressing her "you have nothing to fear—not even revenge for the unseemly opposition you have thus far put in my way. But," he added, threateningly, "you will be wise if you take heed in the future. 'Lady Isabel, I greet you once more. Have I not proved myself a persistent and devoted suitor?'"

This was spoken lightly, but as he passed, a dark frown gathered upon his face, and, addressing both the ladies, who now stood side by side, he said:

"Have I not kept my vow? Did you think I would fail? Blood has been shed, and it must be upon your hands. Nay, start not. This might all have been avoided if you had been reasonable in the first instance. I am now master of this castle, as I am ruler in Lystra; henceforth I shall dictate, and you will obey."

"Jasper St. Julian," cried the countess, pale and quivering, "what will you do with us?"

"First, lady, I shall convey yourself and your fair daughter to my castle of Buchala, where the marriage ceremony will be at once performed. I will make the Lady Isabel my wife, and then I will learn from her by what manner of means she escaped me so unexpectedly."

"Sir Jasper!"

"Hold, lady! My course is laid out, and no mortal power can swerve me. As soon as my men have refreshed themselves we go hence to Buchala, where the marriage ceremony will be at once performed. And I will say to you that no more opportunity of escape will be afforded. My affianced bride shall remain under my own eye henceforth. And to both of you let me add—I can be your friend, or your foe, as you may elect!"

The mother and daughter shrank away beneath the evil look of the perfidious knight, and they observed that stout soldiers gathered near them to watch them.

Then St. Jules turned once more towards those who guarded Douglas and Bertram, and at a given sign they drew forth strong cords from beneath their doublets, while others seized the prisoners and their arms behind them. Douglas protested indignantly against being bound; but his captor paid no heed. Both he and the esquire were securely pinioned, after which St. Jules gave the order for preparing dinner.

"My men have had hard work," he said, "and they must refresh themselves before they start for Buchala. Ladies, will you join us?"

Their only reply was to shrink away, and shut from their tortured sight the demon face of their captor.

(To be continued.)

THE DIAMOND COLLAR.

CHAPTER VIII.

Why, I can smile, and murmur while I smile,
And wet my cheeks with artificial tears,
And frame my face to all occasions. *Shakspeare.*

MRS. CORNELL's cottage was built in the forest beyond Bishopstowe, a lonely but pleasant spot. The old woman lived ostensibly by making nets for the fishermen, but in reality she was more than half supported by the good Bishop of Bishopstowe.

In fact, so thorough was this man's benevolence that hitherto all his emoluments as a Churchman in a high sphere had gone to charitable purposes. He drew a lordly salary; he gave it to the poor. He lived in a palace; the poorest lived not more frugally in a hut.

His expenditure on the suite of rooms for Miss Thouvenal had therefore taken everybody by surprise. But he was such an eccentric man that nobody wondered much at anything he did.

And this lesson he had taught to the smallest child in Bishopstowe—he cared for all who were in grief, in sin, in want. His charity did not, Cain-like, cry "Am I my brother's keeper?"

You may be sure, then, that Mabel Fane worshipped her deliverer, not as a man, but as an angel from Heaven.

Many in the village knew of Mabel Fane's retreat, but not even the most reckless of the factory girls would undo the bishop's work by informing Tyrrol of it, though sure of a handsome reward.

It was a bitter thought to Jerome Thouvenal that he himself shou'd be the first to betray the poor, wounded bird to the ruthless falcon. Never was man placed in a more harrowing position.

On either hand he saw a helpless woman looking up to him for protection. Mabel was his one ewe-lamb, rescued from the jaws of ruin; he tenderly pitied her. Ermengarde was to him as a bright, angelic instant from days long past; he loved, ah, how he loved her!

And one of the twain must be sacrificed, by the machinations of a villain.

The heart within him bled.

Rain-soaked and weary, he reluctantly entered the cottage; and the little cry of welcome which greeted him seemed to reproach him in its happy trust.

He to betray her to such a fiend? Impossible. The old woman, Mrs. Cornell, was nimbly netting on the end of a net which was hung on the wall, an oil lamp flaring before her; and in an old damask chair, which till lately had graced the bishop's own bedroom, sat a pale but handsome girl, who had been filling netting-needles with twine for Mrs. Cornell.

Her hands had fallen into her lap; her fine gray eyes, dim with illness and tears, were now sparkling at the bishop's appearance; and she half rose with her little joyful cry.

"Blessings on your reverence," cried Mrs. Cornell, putting a chair for him close by the invalid's; "ye come in all weathers to see the poor lamb."

"How kind!" breathed the girl, in tremulous accents; "and see, your coat is quite wet."

She put her hand on his sleeve; it was an adoring gesture.

The bishop's eyes filled with trouble—with anguish. Mabel or Ermengarde, or the other.

And must it be his ewe-lamb whom he had saved?

"Mabel," he said, in the gentlest voice, "you have repented of the evil you thought to do, I know. You would never seek that which you have escaped from?"

"Never," she whispered, solemnly.

"But if the danger should seek you—ah, Mabel, examine your heart, and tell me, would it stand firm?"

She started violently, for she was weak yet, and looked at him with dilating eyes.

"My lord, you frighten me," she said, with a shiver. "I pray Heaven that I may never see that man again."

The bishop turned away his face, but she saw a look of exquisite misery upon it.

She wept.

"My lord, you don't trust me, and it gives you pain!" sobbed Mabel; "but, indeed, indeed you may. I hope I shall never forget your kindness. I hope that in any circumstance strength would be given me to withstand temptation."

"You love him still," said the bishop, in a low voice, and with a glance of heartfelt sympathy.

Her sensitive eyes shrank from his, and she cringed distressfully.

"Yes," she murmured, humbly; "I won't deny it. I can't pluck my heart out, nor can I change it. I wait for another to do that for me—I ask Him night and day. If I had not loved Mr. Tyrrol, I would not have consented to go with him. It wasn't vice—I loved. And just see how hard it was for me. He told me that but for the accident of my being in rank so much beneath him, we would have been man and wife. That, as it was, my love for him made him quite properly, and I would be doing wrong ever to marry another. He swore that we were married in our hearts. My lord, I own my weakness and my sin in believing such words. I have said before Heaven and to you that I will never give up Tyrrol. Trust me, dear bishop, and feel no more grief and doubt about me. If I should see him again, I humbly trust that Heaven will protect me."

"Mabel, you are right," said the bishop: "Heaven will protect you if you really wish it. But, for your own sake, my poor girl, I would ask you to crush all thoughts of tenderness towards that man. He is a despicable man."

"Ah, sir!" cried, her woman's heart bleeding. "I can despise myself, but I can't despise him. He made me love him faithfully."

"Yes," murmured the bishop, pityingly; "he threw his heartless cunning into the work. An unequal contest, indeed—the strong, the merciless, against the weak and confiding. But if Heaven be on our side, who can be against us? Mabel, he wishes to see you again; dare I permit him to test your repentence?"

Mabel Fane sank back in extreme agitation. Her thin, delicate countenance revealed the swift transit of her emotions.

Joy, pain, and bravery each passed in turn, and the bishop watched her in breathless suspense.

"He wants to see me, does he?" murmured the girl; "he wants to tempt me back to him. My lord, I would rather not see him, unless you think the test is needed."

"If your heart wavars, tell me, Mabel," said the bishop.

She bent her head on her bosom, in deep thought, and, when she looked up, glad tears were in her eyes.

"It doesn't waver, your lordship," she said, calmly. "I think could be tear me, piecemeal, I would stand firm."

"Thank Heaven!" said Bishop Thouvenal, with fervour.

And for a few moments the light of a great joy was on his countenance.

Then he turned to her.

"Mr. Tyrrol has threatened me with a wicked injury," he said, "if I do not tell him where you are. He threatened the destruction of one whom I love profoundly—Miss Thouvenal. If you can meet him without wavering in your good resolution, you will do me a great service."

Mabel gazed at him with terror, and presently with joy.

"Can I do you a service?" she cried, clasping her hands; "oh, then, I am firm indeed, if it is for your sake. Does he threaten you? I had not thought him so wicked. Let him come to-morrow, my lord; I'll give him his answer. Let him—let him come, my lord. I long to do something for you who have done so much for me."

Her face was brilliant in its enthusiasm; lovely, ingenuous Mabel! 'twas indeed no wonder that the rascally Tyrrol had marked her for his prey.

Long and earnestly the bishop looked down in her fine face; his heart was heavy as lead. But she never ceased to implore him to tell Mr. Tyrrol of her retreat, and trust to her sincerity for her safety, that Miss Thouvenal might be spared.

Aud with a sad, perplexed brow he blessed her and went his way.

Walking homeward he gazed up in the cloudy sky as if he would pierce the veil and read the face of Heaven.

"Help! help! or we perish!" he was saying in his soul.

At eleven o'clock the next morning the Honourable Peregrine Tyrrol was throwing himself from his roan steed at the door of the bishop's palace.

Jonson promptly ushered him into a small antechamber and carried his card to his master.

Without a word the bishop wrote a line, sealed it in an envelope, and handed it to the footman with a wave of dismissal.

Tyrrol received it and read the enclosed address with great satisfaction, then, having mastered the bishop at one point, prepared to master him at another.

"My good fellow, what sort of a place have you here, eh?"

The footman grinned.

"Plenty of beer, good company, and high wages? A jovial life, eh?"

"Hem! rather so, sir." "Ah, you dog! you've got much too knowing a figure-head to flunk it in a bishop's mouldy palace. Those legs of yours ought to carry you into society."

"Now, sir, surely you're having your joke at me?"

"Not a bit of it, my lad. I say, are you fond of money?"

Every tooth in Jonson's mouth signified a separate assent.

"Because you have a chance of getting plenty if you keep your eyes about you."

"Yes, sir."

Tyrrol fixed his hawk eyes attentively upon the man.

"You'll find the bishop's niece an interesting study no doubt. A ver-y in-ter-esting stud-y, my lad, as well as a re-in-ter-est-ing one. Good morning."

The Honourable Peregrine bestrode his horse and rode off.

But not to Mrs. Cornell's cottage, though the bishop spent a morning of remorse in picturing to himself the possible fate of his poor ewe-lamb.

Peregrine Tyrrol knew well of what stuff a woman's heart was made—none better, and he had no intention of seeking his victim while there was the possibility of a repulse.

"She shall watch for me night and day until her anger turns to terror lest I leave the fold unchallenged," he mocked, as he rode leisurely home; "and when the virtuous resolutions with which she is primed have ebbed lower and lower, and when the passion-tide is on the turn, then I will come, and find her ready to spring into my arms."

These, and similar fine schemes, fully occupied him during the whole of his ride home to Vionima.

He pondered deeply; and, mark you, when bad men ponder, with that wicked smile, good men may tremble.

In pursuance of this decision of his, the expected serpent (although, alas! most yearningly looked for) still was invisible in that Eden of virtue, the widow's cottage, and Mabel remained unmolested.

Constantly the bishop went to the cottage, almost trembling lest he should be met with the tidings that she had been taken away; but she was always there; and her eyes spoke of an eager waiting that went to find her spirit was leaving her; the triumph which she had felt in the depths of her heart was giving place to humiliation. It was the bitterest blow of all to find she had been forgotten.

Weeks passed; but though Tyrrol was actively laying a train in which he hoped to blow up the bishop with all his belongings sky-high, his hostile intentions seemed to have been abandoned. He left Bishopstowe, and was reported to have gone to London on business.

He often boasted that he never did anything in a hurry; and neither did he; though, like the ill-boding raven, when he did strike, it was between the eyes.

A month after the events related, Mr. Tyrrol appeared one bright winter day, in the very path of the invalid girl, who was slowly creeping about the widow's frozen garden, like a plant bleached in the darkness.

He had watched from the windows of the "Dragon" until the widow had tottered past on her way to the meat shop, for her weekly supply of twine; and while the prey was left unguarded, he flew to secure it.

"Mr. Tyrrol!" gasped the trembling girl. "Oh, sir, is it you?"

And then the great joy of seeing him, though he was her enemy, overcame her, and she covered her face.

Peregrine had calculated to a fraction the exact number of points which his elegant furred coat, his small bare hand, his diamond ring, his carefully trimmed hair and moustache, his dash and polish, would gain him; and he had attired himself as carefully as if he had been going to a drawing-room at St. James's.

As he looked at that trembling figure, leaning against the stone wall, all fringed with icicles, and sobbing convulsively behind her faded shawl, he felt every inch a conqueror. All he had to do was to hold out his little finger.

"My poor Mabel!" he cried, drawing her from the icy wall to his own far more icy heart; "you shall suffer no more. I have come to take you away from them all."

"Go away from me, Mr. Tyrrol! You must not speak to me!" sobbed the girl.

"They are killing you!" groaned the lover; "and I shall lose my darling by death, for I am sure she has not for one moment been false to me in her heart. Look at this feeble form, these wretched garments, that miserable hovel, and tell me, Mabel, would I not have been kinder to you than this?"

Not one word of reproach for her ill-conditioned desertion of him. Who could say he was not a forgiving angel?

"Go away—go away!" murmured the girl, in fainter accents.

"What, and lose my pretty one again? Not if fifty bishops tried to break our hearts."

"Don't speak against the bishop. He is a good man, and I will never grieve him."

"My darling! So she has let some one come between our hearts already. Oh, Mabel, Mabel, you were born to break my heart."

"Sir, as it goes, it's more likely to be the other way."

"No, no; don't say that, love! But listen to me. The bishop, with all his goodness, cannot make you happy, as I can see by these dull eyes, which I used to call as bright as jewels. That's what the bishop's goodness does for you; while my love would have surrounded you with every luxury which such a delicate being was born to enjoy, and you should never have worked again. Surely, surely, Mabel, you would have been happier with Tyrrol's adoration?"

And all the while he spoke these honied words, which were like daggers hidden in flowers, he was tempting her—tempting her to the edge of a fathomless abyss; one push now, and she would be over.

With an imperceptible force, which was fascination itself, he entwined his arm about her, and led her down the frozen path.

"If I did listen to you," gasped Mabel, through ashy lips, "what would you give me in return for the Heaven which I should have lost?"

"You did not use to ask me these questions, my darling. I fear that those new friends of yours have made you selfish and cold; I see that you care no more for me."

"Would to Heaven that it were so!" she moaned, pressing her hand wildly to her heart.

In a moment he had her in his arms; he was sure of her now, for she clung to him.

"Look," he whispered, fondly, as he pointed to a glittering carriage among the trees; "I am resolved to have my little girl. You shall see the enchanting home which has remained desolate for want of you, since that unlucky night."

He strode with quick steps down the flinty footpath; his piax lay half-fainting in his arms.

Oh, winter sea, moan loud against the iron-bound cliff! Oh, shuddering angel, hold the trumpet down, and murmur "Death," for your feeble mortal has turned her back upon you!

Suddenly the girl sprang with a shriek from the deadly embrace; for a vision of a yearning and melancholy face had risen before her eyes; the memory of one who had come out of a luminous cloud to save her.

"Begone, tempter!" she cried. "I love you no more!"

With the bound of a young panther she passed him; rushed up the path, and locked herself within the cottage.

The danger had passed; the opportunity was gone.

A few factory women, coming home to their dinner, turned the curve of the road. Cursing his failure, and unutterably mortified, Tyrrol sprang into his grand chariot, and bade the coachman drive back to the village.

(To be continued.)

SPORTING AT HAMPSTEAD IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.—The following Royal Proclamation will give our readers a new view of the sporting state of Hampstead and Highgate a little more than three centuries ago:—"Rex majori et vicecomitibus London. Vobis mandamus, etc. Forasmuch as the King's most Royal Majestic is much desirous of having the game of hare, partridge, pheasant, and heron, preserved in and about his honour at Westminster for his diport and pastime; that is to saye, from his said palace, to our Ladye of the Oke to Higate and Hampstead Heath, to be preserved for his own pleasure and recreation; his Royale Highness doth straightways charge and commandeth all and singular of his subjects, of what estate and condition soev' they be, not to attempt to hunt or hawke or kill any of the said games within the pre-

cinets of Hampstead, as they tender his favour, and would eschew the imprisonment of their bodies and further punishment at his Majestie's will and pleasure. Teste meipso apud Westm. viij. die Julij, anno preciso septimo Henrici Octavi, 1546."

LADY BARBARA.

CHAPTER XXIX.

SIR GRAHAM GALLAGHER was seated by one of the long French windows overlooking the mere. He arose at Lord Champney's entrance, and came forward with outstretched hands, his patriarchal face beaming.

His lordship welcomed him cordially.

"It seems an age since I saw you last, my dear Sir Graham!" he exclaimed, his dark face lighting with a friendly glow.

"It is an age!" declared the Court physician. "We have not met since Lady Champney's memorable illness seventeen years ago. And since then you have served our country at a foreign Court, and loaded your name with honours, and have changed from the impulsive, impetuous boy—you were little more then, if you were married—into a grave, dignified, and stately man."

Lord Champney uttered a sigh.

"And you," he responded, letting fall the physician's hand, and motioning him to return to his seat—"you have changed also. You have added a title to your name, and are known as one of the first in your profession. Yet life may have dealt as hardly with you, after all, as with me. This brilliant success in material things may cover an uneasy, or a broken heart. You have an anxious, troubled, preoccupied look—"

"It is not for myself," interposed Sir Graham, who was meditating upon the best plan of breaking to his host the news he had brought. "Life has been bountiful to me. My home is pleasant, my wife affectionate and sympathising, my children all well settled in life. I am contented—happy."

Lord Champney looked at his guest wistfully.

"You have drawn prizes in the great lottery of life," he muttered. "And I—I have drawn blanks!"

The stately old Court physician, leaning his chin on the top of his staff, looked at his host wonderingly.

"Blanks!" he repeated, glancing around the elegant apartment. "Blanks—with such a home! with such a name! with the fairest, queenliest wife in the land!"

There was something in the old doctor's manner that touched the spring of Lord Champney's griefs—something so paternal, so kindly, that he was tempted to tell him all his miserable story.

"You think I am to be envied, Sir Graham," he said, bitterly, "but I am the most unhappy man in the kingdom! What comfort does it afford me that I am called a successful Minister, an accomplished diplomatist? My nature is more domestic than ambitious. I have had no home for seventeen years. I have been restless, jealous, suspicious, unhappy, accursed!"

Sir Graham's face was full of concern and sympathy.

"Is it possible?" he asked. "I knew that you lived abroad, and that Lady Champney lived in seclusion on her estate of Saltair. But I never dreamed of this state of affairs between you. I supposed that you made frequent visits home, and that her ladyship's health did not permit a foreign residence. I thought that your ambition was paramount. What could have brought about such a terrible estrangement, my dear Lord Champney?" and the kindly old physician drew his chair closer to that of his moody, miserable host. "There is not in all England a purer and more discreet lady than your wife. It cannot be that you have ceased to love each other?"

"Yes—no," answered Lord Champney, stammeringly. "Pardon me, Sir Graham, but even to you I cannot talk over this matter. It is enough to say that I love my wife a thousandfold better than in the old days when you know us. But at heart we are dead to each other. It is as Lady Champney said to me on the day of my arrival at Saltair—there is a grave between us!"

"A grave?"

"Yes, the grave of our little child. She buried her love for me with that little creature. And, to show you how completely I am dead to her, she said to me that when I could restore to her the child that had never nestled in her bosom, then she would be to me all that she had been—all that I desired."

Sir Graham's eyes widened. A sudden glow burned on his wrinkled cheeks. A strange light beamed from his eyes.

"Her ladyship said that?" he asked, eagerly.

"Yes—but can one bring back the dead? Can one clothe again in flesh the little mouldering bones? As easy as to kindle in her cold heart the old dead love! I cannot give her child back to her here, but perhaps I may in the hereafter. She does not dream, Sir Graham, that I too have mourned for that little lost one. She forgets, in her mother anguish, that the father too is bereft and sorrowful. In my lonely moments there often comes to me the vision of that little angel. She was more to me than my daughter. She was the link that bound to me my wife. And she died among strangers, and her mother's eyes never saw her."

A sudden agitation seized the old Court physician.

"Heaven bless my soul!" he ejaculated, springing up, and walking to and fro, in great haste, and wiping his spectacles. "I never heard anything like this! And here are two healthy people fretting themselves to death for a trifle!"

"A trifle, Sir Graham?" demanded his lordship, indignantly.

"A mere trifle!" responded Sir Graham, excitedly. "I'll tell you what to do, my lord. Put yourself under my orders, and I'll engage to restore your domestic harmony. You must do as Lady Champney said—give her back her daughter!"

Lord Champney began to think that his guest had gone mad.

"Does the grave give up its dead?" he asked.

"Not that I know of—at least, not alive! But strange things sometimes happen, my lord. You've no idea of the astounding iniquities sometimes perpetrated! This world is a gigantic fraud—at least, the people in it are! Bless my soul! I've just got a clue to the strangest fraud I ever heard of. You'd be astonished if I were to tell you of it—but that is what I am here for. Are you perfectly calm?"

Lord Champney's private opinion in regard to the state of the old doctor's mind became still more unfavourable. He replied to Sir Graham's question in the affirmative, and in a soothing voice.

Sir Graham continued his excited walk, his face flushing to the hue of a poony, and his air that of one burdened with a great secret.

"It's a queer story, as I believe I said," resumed the old Court physician. "This is where it begins. Last night, about midnight, when my family had retired, I was sitting alone in my study, consulting the authorities about a very interesting case I have on hand. In the midst of my work, I heard a low moan, and a sound as of some one falling on the grass outside my window. I ran out—and what should I see but a young girl? I picked her up, and took her into the house. As I heard some one calling after her in my garden, and as the affair looked mysterious, I dropped my curtains to shut out intruders, and then set to work to restore the young girl to consciousness."

"Well?" said Lord Champney, wondering if the doctor's insanity was not, after all, the dottage of old age, "what is all this to me, if I may be allowed to ask, Sir Graham?"

"Wait!" commanded the excited doctor. "Have patience, my lord. As I was bending over this young girl her torn sleeve fell back and I saw on the right arm—mind you, the right arm, and above the elbow—a peculiar mark! It was a small, oddly shaped cross, consisting only of two lines of bright scarlet crossing each other irregularly—"

Lord Champney started.

"The mark was like that of my little dead Barbara!" he exclaimed. "An odd coincidence!"

"Yes, I should think so. Bless my soul!—a very odd coincidence! Well, the girl came to, and she told me her whole pitiful story. She was as beautiful as an angel, with a little restless head covered all over with tiny clinging curls—just the colour of your hair, as true as life," ejaculated Sir Graham, pausing to contemplate his host, after an excited fashion. "She was as slender as a sylph, with a pure, child-like face, and big, innocent, sweet eyes, and a piteous look. And, somehow, she reminded me of you. Your child, if she had lived, would have been the image of that girl, my lord!"

"Indeed!" said Lord Champney, coldly, and not well pleased at the allusion. "And who did this midnight wanderer—this romantic young lady—prove to be?"

"The old Hecate I had heard pursuing her was her mother, she said! This mother, it appears, had sold her in infancy to a kind old Sussex squire, who had brought her up as his daughter, given her every accomplishment, petted her, and loved her—and, in short, as the phrase goes, made a lady of her!"

"A poor speculation on the part of the Sussex squire!" observed Lord Champney, trying to hide a yawn. "Educating people above their station in life isn't so very commendable. It appears that events drove the girl back to the protection of her own mother?"

"The squire died without a will, leaving the girl penniless. The squire's son, an avaricious young man about to marry, gave her a sum of money, and told her that she must go with her mother. And she went. The mother took her to London, where the father joined them. Imagine the position of this young girl. A lady by instinct and education; refined, delicate, and pure as the mountain snow, tied to these parents of hers—a sordid, avaricious, ignorant, drunken couple, who meant to make her support them, honourably or dishonourably, as the case might be!"

Lord Champney shuddered.

"Poor girl!" he said. "You did right to come to me, Sir Graham. Put my name down for any amount necessary!"

The Court physician put up his hand deprecatingly.

"Let me finish," he exclaimed. "This girl had two lovers down in Sussex; one of them a country squire, a young gentleman with a University education; the other a fine town gallant, who was staying at Horsham—"

"Why, that's where Felix—Felix Wamer—you remember him, Sir Graham?—has been stopping so long!"

"The fine gallant visited her in London," continued the doctor, his excitement beginning to abate and to give place to an anxious restlessness as he watched his unconscious host; "and finding that she was no longer an heiress, and that she had such relatives, he made her infamous proposals—"

"The dastardly wretch! The miserable coward!" cried Lord Champney, whose fine sense of honour and strict ideas of justice were aroused to a violent pitch of indignation against the base suitor. "Of course she dismissed the fellow!"

"Yes; but these parents of hers favoured his infamous suit, and the girl fled from them. They recaptured her and took her down to Chiswick, to a cottage in the rear of my garden. Her persecutor came there last night, and found her shut up in an upper room. He threatened her, and went downstairs. The girl then managed to escape by the window, and got over into my garden, with the whole infamous pack after her; she fell fainting before my window, and I took her in."

"And she is at your house now?"

"No. I went to call Lady Gallagher, and when I returned the girl was gone! I haven't seen her since!"

Lord Champney smiled cynically.

"Ah!" he said, significantly. "And were your silver standish, gold pens, and other costly trifles gone, too?"

"No, my lord. The girl had evidently been frightened away, or summoned by this young squire—her country lover—who had helped her escape. She was no impostor—I'll stake my life on that."

"Your faith in human nature is pleasant to witness," said Lord Champney, half smiling, half sighing. "You don't want help for her, since she has disappeared. Why, then, have you come to me with this story, my dear Sir Graham?"

The physician took a hurried turn or two around the room.

"You can't guess?" he then asked.

"Not I. Unless," said Lord Champney, with a sudden start and an incredulous smile, "you mean that you would like me to find this girl, and, taking advantage of the odd coincidence of the birth-mark, present her to Lady Champney as our daughter, about the statement of whose death there was some strange mistake."

Sir Graham stopped short.

"That is just what I mean!" he said.

Lord Champney stared.

"You are insane, then!" he exclaimed, involuntarily.

"Not at all," said Sir Graham. "See how easily the thing could be done. The girl looks like you and your wife. She bears the same mark that your child bore. She is not the daughter of these people who claim her—"

"Not their daughter?"

"No. I know she isn't. She knows it. The couple rented a small farm many years ago in Surrey. The woman had been lady's maid to doctor's wife. The doctor, out of pity and kindly interest, recommended her as nurse to a noble family, and the little noble heiress was sent to her and placed in her charge. The man soon after committed a forgery—"

At this point Lord Champney sprang up, electrified.

"You mean that this young girl, then, is their nurse-child, and not their own offspring?"

"Yes, I mean that."

"The names—the names of this couple?"

"John and Catharine Narr."

Lord Champney looked at the physician in dumb amazement.

Then, a little later, he broke the silence by a whisper.

"Heavens! You mean that the girl is mine—really mine—my own daughter?"

Sir Graham nodded gravely.

Again his lordship was speechless. He leaned against the mantel piece, his face strangely white, his thin lips quivering.

"Have I not broken the news gently enough?" asked the physician, with an anxious smile. "My lord, there has been some gross fraud in this matter. The girl who was in my house last night, and who is claimed by the Narrs as their child, is really and truly the daughter you have so long mourned as dead! I will stake my life on the truth of this statement!"

"It would be a bliss too great for belief," murmured Lord Champney. "No such joy as this would be in store for me!"

"Bless my soul!" cried Sir Graham, impatiently. "You act like a man in a trance, my lord. Rouse yourself. There is no grave between you and your wife now."

Lord Champney looked up, bewildered. He could not comprehend, even yet, his great cause for joy.

"I must go and tell Barbara," he said, taking a step towards the door.

"Not so," said the physician, detaining him. "Let us find the girl first, and bring her to Lady Barbara. Why agitate her ladyship until the child is found? We must search for her. Every minute counts. We must go to the Black Cottage, compel the Narrs to confess, and take the girl from them, if they have recaptured her."

"You are right, Sir Graham," cried Lord Champney, arousing himself—the dazed look deserting his eager, agitated face. "We will hasten to find the child. Will you lunch with us?"

"I should like some refreshment," replied the doctor.

Lord Champney rang the bell, and gave the necessary commands.

He then ordered a carriage to be got ready, with a pair of the fleetest, freshest horses.

By the time Sir Graham had finished his luncheon the carriage was at the door. His lordship was ready, and led the way to the porch.

A minute later and the two were driving swiftly down the avenue.

Half way down the wide drive, Lord Champney put his head out of the carriage and looked back.

Lady Barbara was standing on the balcony, looking after him with a strangely wistful gaze.

With a sudden impulse he waved his hat and smiled at her so eagerly that she smiled back again, and waved her hand.

Then, remembering the last night's scene in the drawing-room, the unhappy husband drew back his head with a stifled groan and a ghastly face.

"At least I shall have one comfort left me," he thought, picturing in his own mind the fair young girl for whom he was now about to search. "My wronged child! Her love will be balm to my sorely bruised heart."

The drive to Chiswick, some fifteen miles, was accomplished in quick time.

Lord Champney directed his coachman to the Black Cottage, in Ivy Lane.

The cottage had a lonely, deserted look as they drove up to the high stone wall, and the coachman pulled the bell.

"Can they have fled?" asked the ex-Minister, uneasily.

Before Sir Graham could reply, the old woman known as the care-taker of the cottage, made her appearance, opening the door in the wall, and peering out at them suspiciously.

"Are Mr. and Mrs. Narr at home?" asked his lordship, mollifying the woman with the gift of a half-crown.

"No, sir, they b'ain't," was the response. "They've gone away."

"Do you know when they'll be back?"

"To-day or to-morrow, sir, they expect. I am putting the cottage to rights while they're gone, and having bars put to the windows, which Mrs. Narr wants 'em, on account of her daughter, sir."

"Ah! Can you tell us where the Narrs have gone?" questioned his lordship.

The woman hesitated. Lord Champney drew a gold piece from his pocket, and held it up to her.

"Yes," the woman cried, greedily, holding out her hand. "They've gone up the river in a little boat. They went afore daybreak. Their daughter's run away along of a young man, and they've gone after 'em."

Lord Champney dropped the coin into the woman's hand.

After a few more questions, he gave the order to drive on.

"What are we to do now, Sir Graham?" he asked,

The Court physician was looking out of the carriage, with keen, scrutinising eyes, at a man slouchily dressed, who was lounging at the corner, looking lazily up and down the lane.

"A detective—or I never saw one!" said Sir Graham. "A detective in plain clothes. He's on the look-out for some one. Perhaps for our amiable friend, Jack Narr. His little forgery business was never settled, you know; and if it has leaked out that he's back in England, that fellow, watching like a lazy old spider there, is after him, sure as fate."

Lord Champney glanced at the slouchily dressed lounger, and repeated his question.

"What are we to do?" echoed Sir Graham, in a puzzled tone. "Bless my soul, if I know. One thing is sure—the Narrs intend to come back when they find the girl. Another thing is equally sure to my mind—they will find her."

"I don't see that is so evident."

"Just look at it. The girl escapes at midnight with her lover. No inn will be open to her at that hour, arriving as she does on foot and unknown. She went in a boat. She'll stay in the boat till morning. By that time some one must have seen her on the river. If she has landed and taken the train at any station, she will be traced. The Narrs, under the guidance of the acute villain with them, will certainly find her. They will as certainly bring her back here. If we follow in their track we may lose them. I propose that we go quietly to the Lodge and wait for developments. We can watch from one of my rooms for any arrivals at the Black Cottage, and at the proper moment we can climb over the wall and descend upon them. What do you say, my lord?"

The plan was feasible. Eager and anxious as Lord Champney was to follow up Dora, and rescue her and claim her, he felt that patience and quiet waiting would serve his purpose better than a frantic search.

"I will go home with you," he said, sighing. "As you say, we will watch the Black Cottage from your house. I am so impatient, Sir Graham, to see my daughter—for I know this girl is my daughter. And I am almost equally impatient," he added, his brow darkening, "to be at home again. Heaven only knows what is happening there in my absence!"

The new order was given to the coachman, and Lord Champney and Sir Graham were driven to Chiswick Lodge, there to await events.

CHAPTER XXX.

WHILE these events, which so closely concerned Dora, were transpiring, Dora herself was rapidly becoming acquainted with her new protectress, and was beginning to feel at home among her new surroundings.

Soon after the establishment of a full understanding between them, tiny Mrs. Peyer, with a motherly look that sat oddly on her small, withered face, escorted Dora to a pretty room upstairs, looking towards the river, and left her there to sleep off her fatigues.

It was past noon when the girl awoke.

She sprang up with a start, and with the expectation of finding herself back in her prison chamber at the Black Cottage, at Chiswick; but her bright and pleasant surroundings immediately reassured her, and brought a delicious sense of peace to her fatigues.

"I should like to stay here for ever," she thought, looking wistfully around the sunny room, with its snow-white bed drapery, its simple canopied chair and its cozy chintz-covered couch. "It seems such a safe refuge, after all I've been through."

She hastened to make her toilette. It was simple enough, for she had no change of garments beyond a fresh collar and cuffs. These were donned, her dress carefully dusted, her hair brushed into a thousand bewitching rings, curling close to her noble little head, and Dora then began to think of rejoining her hostess.

She was still thinking of it when a low knock sounded on the door, and the diminutive hostess—looking like a little old doll in a trailing dinner dress—opened the door and came in.

"I heard you up, my dear," she said, explainingly, "and so came for you. Did you rest well?"

"Very well," said Dora, gratefully. "I was very tired, and I almost wondered that I waked up at all. Is Noel—is Mr. Weir still here?"

A flood of blushes swept over her face in tides as she asked the question.

"No, my dear," responded the old lady, well pleased at Dora's display of colour. "I sent him away long ago. It's well to have him watching those Narrs. There's no knowing what they will do next!"

"How much trouble I am to Noel!" murmured Dora, regretfully.

"There are two kinds of trouble," observed the tiny old lady, sagely. "An unwelcome sort that we have to bear, and a pleasant sort of trouble that we take on ourselves in order to make somebody else's burdens lighter. It's my opinion, my dear, that Noel likes to take care of you."

"He has been kinder to me than any brother," said Dora, shyly.

The wee hostess smiled.

"Well he may be," she said. "Don't you know he loves you, dear? Don't you know that you are more to him than all the old dwarf aunts in Christendom? His love for you is of the old, chivalrous sort, Dora; and I know he would gladly die to secure your happiness. We don't see much of that sort of love in this work-a-day world—much of the self-sacrifice of which Noel is capable. Did you not know he loved you?"

There were tears dropping softly from Dora's bright eyes. She could not answer, but she nodded gently.

The little old lady looked at her wistfully. It was evident that she wanted to know what Noel's chances were of winning this young beauty, with eyes like dusky stars.

"I have always known Noel," Dora stammered, after a pause, yielding to the mute appeal of those eyes uplifted to hers. "He was always brave, and honest, and good. He was always truthful and honourable. I don't believe he could tell a lie—"

"And yet you don't love him?"

"Did I say I didn't?" said Dora, drooping her exquisitely tinted face.

The wee woman beamed all over with smiles.

"Come, come, Dora," she said, briskly. "I'm an old goose to be stirring up the sacred emotions of your heart, like a bull flourishing about in a chin-shop. I am always putting my foot in it, trying to help somebody, but don't you mind me. What I know I know, and what I guess I can keep to myself. But of one thing you may rest assured, Dora," and her voice trembled, and she laid her tiny, shrunken, blue-veined hand on Dora's, "I love you already, for your own sake as well as Noel's, and I shall be glad to see you Noel's wife. I am not one of those who think that to be a lady is only a matter of blood and descent. I have seen vulgar, vixenish women, born of rich families, and totally unworthy the name of lady. I have seen true ladies in the lower ranks of life, gentle, modest, low-voiced women, with kind hearts and pleasant ways. Those qualities, I take it, go far towards constituting the true lady. And you, Dora, if you had been the daughter of a scion, and what you are, would be none the less a lady."

Dora, with a sudden impulse, stooped and kissed the pleasant, earnest old face.

"And now let us go down," said her little hostess; "I want a long talk with you."

She opened the door, leading the way down stairs. Dora followed her to a sitting-room looking towards the river, and directly beneath the chamber assigned the young guest.

It was a cosy room—small, as were all the rooms at Holly Cottage. It had a tiny bay-window, that seemed afraid of pushing itself out into notice. The walls were faintly tinted with green, and were adorned with a few crayon sketches and water-colours. A small book-case, a little quaint old cottage piano open, and with some old-time songs against the rack, a chintz-covered lounge, and two great chintz-covered chairs, comprised the principal features of the furniture.

"What a cosy room!" said Dora, admiringly. "It is my sitting-room, and I find it pleasant," returned the gratified hostess, losing herself in the depths of one of the big chairs, while Dora sat down in the other. "I take a great deal of comfort here, my dear; but, of course, I have many lonely hours. I should like to keep you here with me always if I could."

"And can't you?" asked Dora.

"How can I, dear, when these Narrs are likely to come and take you from me at any time? They may be on your track at this moment. Did any one see you in the course of your journey?"

"We met watermen and others on the river about daybreak, but they didn't speak to us."

"But they used their eyes, I'll warrant," said Mrs. Peyer, with a shake of her little gray head. "Did any one see you land at the foot of my garden?"

"No one, unless some people who were in a barge, and who were going towards London."

"Hum! Those barge people may meet the Narrs and be questioned, and they may not. I incline to the opinion that the Narrs will think you have landed near some railway station—"

"But they won't find any abandoned boat!"

"True," said the tiny hostess, rubbing her nose upward in her thoughtfulness. "Well, these Narrs are sure to trace you sooner or later, Dora. There

is only one safe plan to adopt, only one course to take, to keep you out of their clutches for ever."

"And that?" asked Dora, breathlessly.

"You must marry Noel immediately."

"Impossible!" murmured the girl, lowering her head.

"By no means. Noel will be back to-morrow. You and he can do the preliminary asking and answering, and Noel shall then procure a special licence, and you shall be married on the day after to-morrow. Then, when our fine Narrs arrive, I will tell them that you have gone on a foreign tour—as you must be—with your husband."

The young girl leaned forward, bending her head out of the open bay-window, and burying her face among the fragrant blossoms of a trumpet honeysuckle.

"Dear Mrs. Peyer," she murmured, in a distressed voice. "I cannot marry Noel—I cannot!"

"And why not?" asked the wee hostess, rather sharply, in her anxiety for the happiness of Noel.

"Because—he asked me once when I was known as Dora Chessom, the heiress, and I refused him then," stammered poor Dora. "I thought I liked Mr. Wamer best!"

"Indeed!" said Aunt Tiny, with sarcastic emphasis, knitting her small brows together. "And so you still prefer that perfumed popinjay to my honest, loving Noel? You can't overcome your affection for that worthless object. You must continue to bow down before that image of clay, just like the senseless women in some novels I've read. Well, all I can say is—"

She was prevented from uttering her caustic opinion by Dora, who exclaimed, desperately:

"You misunderstand me, Mrs. Peyer. I don't like Mr. Wamer. I have discovered that I never loved him. That was only a girlish fancy, and I am ashamed of it."

"Well, that fellow's conduct hasn't set you against all mankind, has it?"

Dora shook her head.

"Then why won't you marry Noel?" demanded the sorely puzzled little lady of Holly Cottage.

"Because I refused him when I was his social equal," said Dora, half inaudibly, her face quite hidden among the honeysuckle blossoms. "Don't you see, Mrs. Peyer?"

"No, I don't!"

"Why, why," said Dora, driven to an explanation, "he might think I was marrying him now for a home, and rank, and wealth! No, he wouldn't either. Noel is too noble for that. But if I could not accept him in my prosperous days, I am not going to marry him now in my poverty, and bring upon him countless annoyances from my black-mailing relatives. The Weirs, of Weir Hall, are a good family—as good as any in Sussex. They have never had the word disgrace tacked to their name. Noel's wife should come of a good old country family, as his mother did, and not spring from a family of drunkards. Noel's father-in-law should not be a runaway forger. It's the disgrace I think of—not the poverty."

"Hum!" observed the wee old lady, again rubbing her nose upward, reflectively. "You would be quite right, my dear, if the father-in-law and mother-in-law were also to be partners in the marriage. But a man marries one woman, and her only. Now, it seems to me that Noel is quite competent to manage these Narrs. And if you should go abroad, you know, they can't molest you."

"I can't bring disgrace on my husband," said Dora, firmly.

"Well, do you know, my dear, that I think all that very noble, very generous, and very foolish?" asked Aunt Tiny. "But is it worth while to weigh such scruples as these against Noel's happiness, your own safety, and my comfort? Would you risk being recaptured by the Narrs, and undergoing further persecutions at the hands of that Wamer?"

This was a new view of affairs to Dora.

"And just think of the trouble and anguish to that poor lad of mine!" continued the tiny old lady, shrewdly. "He will have to release you again and again from the Narr's hands. He will fight Wamer, and may possibly get killed in some encounter with him—"

"Oh, no, no!" said Dora, shuddering.

"We never know how these things will turn out!" observed the wee woman, artfully. "My poor boy! He will never cease to battle for you. He will kill these people, or be killed by them, before he gets through!"

There was a long silence.

At last the girl broke it, saying, in a sobbing voice:

"Couldn't I go somewhere, Mrs. Peyer, and hide away from all pursuit? I can earn my own living. I have got money. Couldn't I get into some school or family as a teacher?"

"That Wamer will never rest till he finds you. And when he finds you, the Narrs will stand by ready to claim you. You'd better take an old woman's advice, Dora, and marry this young fellow you despise!"

"Oh, no, I don't despise him!" cried Dora, eagerly. "He is the noblest, dearest, best—"

Her voice broke down.

The old lady smiled shrewdly.

"Well, well!" she said, caressingly, "we'll let the matter rest till to-morrow. Noel shall talk it over with you when he comes."

And at this point the subject was dropped.

Mrs. Peyer took up an embroidery frame as large as herself, and chatted busily while she worked industriously at a group of impossible flowers, which were intended to ornament the centre of a sofa pillow.

Luncheon was eaten. The afternoon wore on, and brought the dinner hour, six o'clock.

The ladies adjourned to the dining-room, through whose West window the sunlight was stealing in between the interstices of the wanton convolvuli.

"I always have dinner at six," observed Mrs. Peyer, taking her usual high chair before the table, and motioning her guest to the opposite side. "It's true I have no man about, and could as well dine earlier, as solitary women do generally, but habit is everything."

She carved the meat, and Hannah, the prim maid, waited upon Dora.

They lingered nearly an hour in the little dining-room, with its cool shadows, and the fragrance exhaling from the drooping bells of the convolvuli, and then returned to the sitting-room, where they sat and talked until after the sun set.

"It grows cooler now," said Mrs. Peyer, throwing open all her shutters, to let in the cool evening breeze that came with the beginning of the long twilight. "How pale you look, Dora! Your late excitement is not going to make you ill?"

"I think not," said Dora. "I am used to the fresh air, and have had but little of it lately, since I left the Grange. How pleasant it is to see a real country garden! Do you think, Mrs. Peyer, that there would be any danger in my running down to the river and back again?"

Mrs. Peyer mounted a chair, and looked out.

The river seemed silent and deserted. No barges, no boats of any description were visible. No sound of rough voices came up from the water.

"There is nobody out, I think," she said. "It will do you good to take a run down the garden. I would go with you, but a walk at this hour would give me rheumatism enough to last me a month. I'll call Hannah."

"Please don't!" said Dora, coaxingly. "I won't be gone long enough to make it worth while to call her from her work. I only want a breath of fresh air and a bunch of those red roses on the lower trellis by the river wall."

Mrs. Peyer smiled assent.

Dora ran upstairs for her hat, and a minute later was exploring eagerly the beauties of the river-side garden.

Little Mrs. Peyer watched her smilingly from the window.

The girl tripped along, stooping over the pansy-beds, plucking roses, and hurrying down to the river's edge.

She paused on the top of the flight of steps, and looked in either direction alternately.

There seemed no boat near. There was a strong, fresh breeze blowing down the stream, and the current flowed swiftly seaward.

Dora was enjoying the scene, with a blissful sense of security, when a noise at her feet startled her.

Looking downward, she beheld in the shadow of the wall, close up to the stone steps, a sail-boat, the sail lowered.

And in this boat crouched her enemies—the Narrs and Wamer.

For an instant she was stupefied.

Then she turned to flee.

Too late! Before she had taken two steps, her pretended parents had leaped out, mounted the stairs, and seized her!

"Not a word!" said Mrs. Narr, fiercely, as the girl struggled and screamed for help. "Stop that! Who can take you away from your own parents? Be silent, or it will be the worse for you!"

Between them, the Narrs seized the girl and bore her down to the boat.

Mrs. Narr sat down beside Dora, and held her in a close embrace.

Wamer pushed off, Jack Narr seizing the oars to row the boat midway into the stream.

"Pretty cleverly done!" said Wamer, as Narr, dropping the oars, began to hoist the sail. "With this wind and current, we shall be back at Chiswick."

before we know it. Ah, Miss Dora," he added, addressing the despairing young girl, "you little know who you are fighting with! You didn't think we should find you? A barge-man told us your retreat just as we were on the point of landing at Kew. And here you are again safely in our power!"

"Which she won't leave again," declared Mrs. Narr, grimly. "I'm tired of this 'ere filing and blowing. I won't be dancing about for a young girl's whims. You've got to marry Mr. Warner, or I'll starve you into it. You hear that, girl?"

"I'll never marry him," said Dora. "I'll die first."

"We shall have to stupefy her with the drugs," said Narr. "Poor Miss Dora! I'd a helped if I could. What can she want better than an honest marriage with the heir to a title?"

Dora looked up in a great terror. They would drug her into a stupor, and then compel her marriage to this evilly smiling and triumphant enemy! A deathly faintness swept over her. And the boat, the wind catching her sail, bounded on, bearing her to her prison.

(To be continued.)

LEIGHTON HALL.

CHAPTER XXXI.

WHY Edna cried she hardly knew herself, certainly not for Roy, as she believed, though there was a very sore spot in her heart when she remembered that Georgie was to be his wife. She was crying, she thought, for the pleasant home she must ere long give up; for after coming there as she had done, she could never confess who she really was, and so she must go away for ever, and never see them again, nor Charlie's grave. She tried to believe it was this last which made Leighton Place so delightful, though she knew in her heart that she was happier than she would have been had that grave never been made, and called herself a monster for it, and cried all the harder until she heard Mrs. Churchill coming up the stairs and knew her services would be needed. Remembering what had been said of her as Miss Overton, there was an added tenderness and gentleness in her voice and in her manner as she read the evening chapter to the half-blind woman, and then helped to disrobe her. To brush and smooth Mrs. Churchill's hair was one of her nightly duties, and her soft fingers moved caressingly over the thin locks and about her forehead until the lady declared herself absolutely mesmerised, and drawing Edna's face down to her lips, kissed her affectionately, saying as she did so:

"Excuse the liberty, if it is one, but you seem more like a daughter than a stranger, and Miss Overton, you know, of course, I am to have a daughter by-and-by, Georgie, Miss Burton; she is to be Mrs. Roy Leighton, and I am glad, and think my son could not have chosen better, or as well, perhaps—but—I want you to stay just the same, even if Edna, that is, Mrs. Charlie Churchill, comes, too, as Roy means to have her. Will you, Miss Overton?"

"You may get tired of me by that time and glad to have me leave," Edna replied, evasively, making some excuse to leave the room and staying away so long that the conversation was not resumed when she returned again, bringing the medicine which Mrs. Churchill always kept standing by her bed at night.

Edna had not counted upon all the unpleasant things to which the peculiarity of her position would subject her. She had no idea that she should so often hear herself discussed, or be compelled to feel so continually that she was living and acting a falsehood, or she would never have been there as she was, and that night after leaving Mrs. Churchill she began a letter to Aunt Letty, asking if she had not better leave at once, before she became wholly hardened in deception.

Georgie spent the next day and the next at Leighton. Her friends were gone, and she acted the sweet, amiable daughter and bride elect to perfection, and petted and patronised Edna, and took to calling her "Dotty," in imitation of Maude, and talked a great deal about "poor Charlie," and looked straight at Edna as she did so, and went with her when she carried flowers to his grave, and called her a dear, kind creature to be so thoughtful for Mrs. Churchill.

"Of course it is not as if you had known him," she said, and again her great black eyes went straight over to Edna, who coloured scarlet, and turned her face away to hide her guilty blushes.

Georgie was bent upon torturing her, and, seating herself in one of the chairs, went over with all the harrowing particulars of the railroad disaster—the fearful storm, the body crushed beneath the wreck, and the young girl trying to extricate it. And Edna, listening to her, she felt as if she could scream out-

right with pain, so vivid was the picture Georgie drew of that dreadful scene. Will she never stop, she thought, as Georgie showed a disposition to follow the body home and relate all that had occurred there, when Mrs. Churchill went into convulsions, and denounced the girl as Charlie's murderer. Georgie was drawing a little upon her imagination then; but she was accustomed to that; and besides, she had an object in what she was doing. It was not alone to wound and torture her auditor, though that was some satisfaction to her; but it was a fixed purpose in her mind that Edna should not remain at Leighton after her entrance there. She did not like the girl; she had a mean kind of jealousy towards her, and Mrs. Churchill's praises of her only made her more determined that the same roof should not shelter both. She dared not betray Edna's secret, but she could wound her, and torture her, and drive her nearly mad; and do it all so innocently, as she was doing now, asserting nothing positively bad of "that girl whom Charlie married," but just as effectually damning her with faint praise, and saying, finally, that she hoped Roy would not insist upon bringing her home, as he now seemed resolved to do.

"Not that I should care at all. I might and probably should grow fond of her, for John insists that she is very nice, and little Annie, my adopted sister, now worships her, but for dear Mrs. Churchill's sake, I should be sorry to see her here."

"Why so? She talks kindly of her always," Edna asked, hotly, forgetting herself for a moment, in her indignation.

But Georgie was sweetly unconscious of her ex-citement, and replied:

"Yes; Mrs. Churchill is a noble woman, and tries to forgive the girl, and thinks she has done so; but I, who know her so well, can see the efforts she makes to speak kindly of her, and just how she shudders when her name is accidentally mentioned. No, glad as I would be to help and befriend the girl, I am selfish enough to hope Roy cannot find her. But, pray, Miss Overton, don't repeat what I have said. I hardly know why I have spoken so freely, unless that it is that you have a way of taking our hearts by storm, and not appearing in the least a stranger. Maude is your voucher, you know, and I think a great deal of her opinion. By the way, you look a little like Mrs. Charlie Churchill, only prettier, if you will excuse my saying so. I thought of it the first time I saw you here, and spoke of it to Roy, and just for fun asked if it wouldn't be a good joke if you were Edna in disguise."

"What did he say?" Edna asked, and her voice shook so that if Georgie had not already known who she was, she would have betrayed herself.

But Georgie did know, and without looking at her victim she replied:

"He seemed to take altogether a different view of the joke from what I did and expressed himself decidedly against disguises of all kinds. It would please him very much to have Edna do such a thing, as of course she never will. It was merely a romantic suggestion of mine when I saw that you looked like her. Not that I thought you wore she, you know. But I fear that I have wearied you with talk which cannot interest you, of course. You do look pale and fagged. It's the hot morning. Suppose we go back to the house. Ah, there's Roy now; I think I'll join him."

She tripped away across the lawn, and Edna soon saw her walking arm in arm with her lover, leaning lovingly upon him, and occasionally looking up into his face, just as she had a right to look, being his fiancee, but to Edna the sight was almost intolerable, and for want of some better way by which to express her feelings, she dug her little heels into the gravel, making so large a hole that Russell, when he passed that way a little later, ascribed it to the cats, and threatened every one of them with scrynnine before another day.

If Edna had entertained a thought of staying at Leighton after Georgie was mistress there it was gone now; swept away effectually by what Georgie had said to her, just as that nice young lady meant it should be. And what was worse than all, she could never let Roy know who she was, after having been so foolish as to come to him incog. Why had she done it? she asked herself many times. Why had Maude and Uncle Phil suffered it, aye, contrived and advised it, and why hadn't she listened to Aunt Letitia, who had opposed it from the first? But it was too late now. She was here as Miss Overton, and as such she must always remain to Roy and his mother. By her own act she had precluded the possibility of ever showing herself to them in her own proper person.

Mrs. Churchill, who already disliked Edna Brown-ing and looked upon her as Charlie's murderer, would hate Miss Overton should she know the truth, and Roy would hate her too, and that was more than she could bear. She could not lose his respect, and

so she must never claim him as her brother; never see him after she went away from Leighton. It was very hard, and Edna cried bitterly for a few moments, while away in the distance walked Georgie and Roy, up and down, up and down the broad gravel walks, but always where Georgie could command a view of the little figure sitting so disconsolately under the shadow of the grape vine, and weeping as she knew from the motion of the hands which went so often to the face. Georgie was glad. She had done her work well and made Edna's exit from Leighton a sure thing, and her spirits rose proportionately with the mischief she had done. She was very gay for the remainder of the day; very attentive to Mrs. Churchill; very affectionate to Roy; very kind and patronising to the servants, and very familiar to Miss Overton, whom she my-deared many times, and kissed gushingly when at night she finally shook the dust of Leighton from her garments and departed for Oakwood.

In course of time there came a letter from Roy to Edna, sent by him to Aunt Letty's care, and by her to Uncle Philip, who forwarded it to his niece, together with a few lines from himself, telling how "lonesome he was, and how he missed her talk, and the click-clack of her high heels on the stairs, and the whisk of her skirts through the doors."

"I send a letter that came from that remarkable woman, your Aunt Letitia, who wrote to me as follows:

"Philip Overton, forward the enclosed to Edna."

"Short and sweet, wasn't it? But I obey, and send the letter. If Maud is there, tell her the old man is impatient for a sight of her blue eyes and bright face. Come up here, both of you, as soon as you can

"Yours to command,

"PHILIP OVERTON."

This was Uncle Philip's letter, and Edna cried over it a little, and knew just how lonely the old man was without her, and half wished she had not left him. "Though it would have been dreadful never to have known Roy at all," she said to herself, as she opened next Aunt Letitia's letter, and read what that worthy woman had to say.

There was a good deal about her "neurology," and a cure she had found for it, and about the new rector. She hoped Edna felt better now she was at Leighton, though she was foolish for going, and more so if she stayed there after that woman, with a boy's name, came as my lady.

"You see Roy was not satisfied with sending me a letter for you, but he must needs write to me too and tell me he was going to be married; the more fool he, and that he should insist upon knowing where you were, so he could see you face to face, and persuade you to live at Leighton, your proper place.

"So you see what's before you, and you know my advice, which, of course, you won't follow. You are more than half in love with Roy yourself; don't deny it; I know better; and that girl with the boy's name will find it out, if she has not already, and you'll hate one another like pi'sen, and it's no place for you. Better come back to Aunt Letitia, and keep the school this winter. They want a teacher."

"According to orders I send this to your Uncle Philip, and suppose you'll answer through the same channel and tell if you'll come home about your business and teach school, and I board you.

"Yours with regret,

"LETITIA A. PEPPER."

"Go home, and teach school and board with Aunt Letitia?" Edna repeated to herself, as she finished the letter; she might have added, "and leave Roy," but she did not, though her face turned scarlet as she recalled the words, "You are more than half in love with Roy yourself."

Was that true? She could not quite answer that it was, and yet it would be very hard now to leave Leighton unless compelled to do so by Georgie's presence there. She tried to believe it was her attachment to Mrs. Churchill which made the place so dear to her—that Roy had nothing to do with it except in so far as he helped to make her life very pleasant. She was not in love with him, she decided at last; if she were, she should think it plainly her duty to leave at once, but as it was, she should remain until the wedding, which had not yet been appointed—some time before Christmas, Georgie had told her, while Mrs. Churchill had said:

"Roy will not marry till spring."

And she believed the latter because she wanted to. Edna could not leave Roy now, although she had contemplated doing so when she wrote to her aunt. The two weeks passed in daily intercourse with him had made his society a kind of necessity to her happiness, and so she shut her eyes to all danger and said to herself:

"I shall stay as long as I can. I owe it to Mrs. Churchill, who would miss me so much."

(To be continued.)

[October 1, 1870.]



[THE LATE LORD CHIEF BARON.]

SIR FREDERICK POLLOCK.

MEN'S minds have been so much occupied lately in watching the sanguineous conflict between France and Germany, and in speculating upon the possible future of Europe when the strife shall be over, that events which have not directly influenced its course have passed unnoticed; so that, while an engrossing attention has been bestowed upon the heroes of war, the heroes of peace have been for the time forgotten.

There must, therefore, be something especially worthy of admiration in the career of a man whose death can arrest the attention of a nation at a time like this—whose tranquil end at a ripe old age it is given to few to attain can turn the current of thought away from contending armies, and make the story of his life more interesting than the history of a campaign. It will be seen that in the peaceful course of uninterrupted success that marked the life of Sir Frederick Pollock there is a more valuable lesson for mankind than in the most triumphant career of a victorious general.

About ninety years ago a certain David Pollock kept a saddler's shop near Charing Cross. He married a Miss Sarah Parsons and had a family of children. His wife was a clever, energetic woman; he was a shrewd, steady, hardworking, enterprising man—was successful in business, obtained contracts for supplying the army with saddlery, waxed rich, and was wise enough to educate his children in a manner that fitted them for the great positions they were destined to fill. No less than three of his sons rose to eminence in the world. The eldest, David (afterwards Sir David) Pollock, became Chief Justice of Bombay; the third son is famous as Field Marshal Sir George Pollock, the hero of the Khyber Pass and of Cabul, a man equally distinguished in council and in field; and the second son, who departed this life full of years and honours, surrounded by all that should accompany old age, was the late Right Hon. Sir Frederick Pollock, Baronet, for

twelve years the popular, eloquent, and distinguished Lord Chief Baron of Exchequer.

Sir Frederick Pollock was born on the 23rd of September, 1783, at his father's house, in the parish of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields. He was educated at St. Paul's School, where he remained till he was about eighteen years of age. Here he was distinguished for hard work as well as for learning, and was the best in the school both in classics and in mathematics. He was sent to Cambridge in 1802, where he found his reputation had preceded him; and, after coming out first in almost every college examination, he closed a most brilliant undergraduate career by "going out" Senior Wrangler and Smith's Prizeman in 1806, the best year between 1800 and 1830.

He used to tell in after-life a story of his great disappointment when, on looking at the list of successful prize-men for his own name, he could not find it there. "I looked down the list," he said, "in much perplexity, and when I came to the fourth name I exclaimed, 'Why, I know I beat that man.' However, my name was not there, and I was turning away, sadly enough, when, happening to look upward, I saw that the man who had nailed the list on the college gate had driven his nail through the top name; the one I had taken for the first was the second, the first name was mine, and I was Senior Wrangler."

Mr. Pollock had determined upon going to the bar, and in due course, after taking his M.A. degree, he was called by the Hon. Society of the Middle Temple. His practice soon became so extensive that once, at Lancaster, out of a cause list of 282 cases, no less than 240 briefs were delivered to him. He used to say that he always made it a point to select at each place a case that would admit of a speech being made on his own behalf, to keep alive his reputation as an orator; the rest of his cases he fought for his clients solely. His legal merits were enhanced by his personal worth, his scrupulously honourable character, and his uniform courtesy and kindness to all with whom he

was brought into contact, either in his legal capacity or in society.

In 1813 he married Frances, the daughter of Dr. Rivers, of Spring Gardens, and by this lady, who died in 1827, he had eleven children. The eldest son, who now succeeds to the title as second baronet, is Mr. William Frederick Pollock, a Master in the Court of Exchequer, who was born in 1815, is married, and has a large family; the youngest son, Colonel Pollock, is now serving in India. In 1835 Sir Frederick Pollock married a second time—to Sarah Ann, the daughter of Captain Lanslow, of Hatton, by whom he had a large family, altogether upwards of twenty children by both wives.

In his social and domestic life no man was ever more beloved than Sir Frederick. His manner and conversation were equally charming, his memory so prodigious that there were few quotations from known authors that he could not continue and complete, whether in poetry or prose, and his eloquence and command of the English language apparently inexhaustible; the right word was always on the tip of his tongue, ready to be dropped into its proper place, and his unaffected gaiety and liveliness of manner were so remarkable that he was as welcome among young people at eighty as if he had been eighteen.

When he was about fifty years of age he contested Huntingdon in the Conservative interest, and was returned to Parliament. In 1834 he was made Attorney-General, and was knighted under the administration of Sir Robert Peel; but the Prime Minister soon resigned, and Sir Frederick (who had been compelled by custom to leave his circuit) resumed his place as an ordinary practitioner at the bar. In 1841 the return of Sir Robert Peel to power brought him again forward as Attorney-General, and in 1844 he was appointed Chief Baron of Exchequer upon the sudden death of Lord Abinger, who died on circuit at Bury-St. Edmunds. As Chief Baron he showed himself an excellent judge, sound, safe, sensible, and indefatigable—always at his post, and inflexible in the discharge of his official duties. His merits were universally recognised, and from the highest to the lowest he won respect and cordial esteem. His colleagues were Barons Park, Alderson, Gurney, and Rolfe, and with them all he was exceedingly popular, and immediately established his position as chief of his Court.

During his career as Chief Baron he presided at some of the most important criminal trials, notably those of the Mannings for the murder of O'Connor, and of Müller for the murder of Mr. Briggs. On all these occasions he exhibited the highest qualities of a judge—firmness, patience, clearness in his explanation of the points of law that arose in each case, and a lucidity in his summing up that was beyond all praise.

In July, 1856, upon the return of Lord Derby to power, Sir Frederick retired upon his judicial pension, and resigned his office of Chief Baron of the Exchequer, which he had held for twelve years. At the same time he accepted a baronetcy.

But the weight of eighty-three years of mental and bodily labour had not tamed or worn out the activity of the aged Chief Baron. To the last he was ceaselessly occupied with scientific pursuits, which, laid aside during his long life of toil, and only occasionally taken up in scanty leisure hours, were resumed with the ardour of youth at an age when most men relapse into a mere patient endurance of existence. He was always a remarkably early riser, and long before the rest of the world was awake, he was up and hard at work upon the study he most affected—mathematics. He was also an able experimental chemist, and after his retirement became an expert photographer. There were no bounds to his industry, none to his energy, none to the genial nature which made him life and soul of his domestic circle. He displayed the greatest interest in the sports of young people, to whom he was much endeared, and was a constant and lively visitor to the croquet ground, where he used to enter into the game with the same energetic appreciation that marked his more important pursuits. In short, he lived a life at once useful to his country and honourable to himself, and died universally respected and beloved.

This is no life of a great man who rises from the gutter to grandeur by tremendous force of character, nor is it the life of a man who gains position by the advantages of aristocratic connection or political interest—it is the life of the son of a plain English tradesman, a life that in some of its features is within the reach of many of that respectable and numerous body called the middle classes, amongst whom may be found numbers of men constantly being pushed forward by education and industry into the ranks of the noble English aristocracy, and into which they bring new blood, new ideas, and new power—a power that derives increased vigour from the connection of its holders with the great body of the nation.



[THE MINIATURE.]

FIFTEEN THOUSAND POUNDS, DEAD OR ALIVE!

CHAPTER XI.

Think'st thou there are no serpents in the world?
But those that slide along the grassy sod?

Shakespeare.

THE baronet was alone at last—free to think of the past, with the burning light of those exultant eyes dazzling his dizzy brain.

His thoughts were fierce and desperate, full of impotent anger and stinging self-reproach. Not self-reproach because of the evil he had done, and sought to do, but because he had not done more evil, and because what he had done had not been better hidden.

An hour ago and he was the cool, calm, self-contained, stately Sir Jules de Cressy; the admired, the envied, and unmarried! And now he was grovelling in the dust and ashes of ruined plans, shattered hopes, and wretched ambition.

And with all he found himself a married man, and Lady de Cressy a haughty woman with an iron will, a steel-hard hate, and a fearful power over him.

He sat motionless and began to think of the past. His life glided before his memory like the scenes of a moving panorama.

First he beheld himself in his boyhood—thus:

A petted, pelulant, pampered pest of a boy; unyielding to counsel, scornful of advice; grieving the heart of an indulgent father, and crushing the heart of a fond mother; reckless, wild, self-willed, violent; servile to his superiors, despotic, arrogant, insolent to his equals, a tyrant to all below him; vicious of soul; quick in learning evil, contemptuous of all that was good—and cunning as a fox.

This evil boy, counting on his fingers the thousands of his dying father might leave him; then, his father dead, his mother dying soon after.

As a youth he saw the image of himself still more vile at heart, squandering the fortune left him, defrauding his guardian, wandering in search of evil adventures, deceiving this one and that one, and among them the handsome Julie Sterlington. Then deserting her, and exultant in his cunning and baseness, the false name of Clarence Vereton is laid aside for another, for he delights in hiding his true name of Jules Amour de Cressy, and his cunning bids him do so that the footprints of crime he leaves behind him may not be associated with that name as his.

From his earliest years he has known that chance may some day give him the great baronetcy of De Cressy, of which he is a distant claimant. In all

his wanderings and villainies he does not forget this, and so he carefully guards his true name. There is an old earl, the Earl of Barland, very old and very infirm, and when this earl dies his next heir will be the lord of Cressy Hall, Sir Childeric de Cressy. But if Sir Childeric should die without heirs male, Jules Amour de Cressy will be next heir of the earldom of Barland.

Jules remembers all this, and is careful of his identity. But he hears that Sir Childeric has married one Clara de Rollan, and that an heir to the baronetcy and the earldom may be born. Then he hears that an heir has been born. He resolves to cut off that heir, and goes to Scotland to mature his plans. While there he plants fresh footprints of crime, as Albert Silaston, and perpetrates a foul wrong upon a Scottish family jealous of its honour, with but one son old enough, then, to resent the outrage.

Of this outrage and its consequences to Sir Jules we will speak at a more advanced part of this story.

The elder son of the Scottish family resents the foul injury done to his sister, and he fights a duel with the betrayer, Albert Silaston. Then there is bitter wailing in the home of the dishonoured family, for the elder son is slain by the practised arm of Jules Amour de Cressy, alias Silaston.

He returns by devious ways to England, and learns with joy that Sir Childeric is dead, that the baronet and his lady and their infant son have perished at sea.

In due time he declares himself, as if having been absent from England for years, and the law establishes him at Cressy Hall as Sir Jules de Cressy.

He is lord of Cressy Hall and has its vast wealth at last. Of his crimes he thinks little, for no one suspects that the baronet of Cressy is a man who has worn a score of false names, and made each name infamous with a crime.

He is secure, he fears no evil; he has heard that Julie Sterlington is dead, and he knows that "Ned Logan" will be a convict for life far over the distant seas. He looks about for a noble lady whom he shall make Lady de Cressy. He must wed in the peerage, for he is sure to be Earl of Barland in time, though the old earl lives long.

He follows a fair young peeress to the Continent—is refused, and on his return to Cressy Hall is met by Julia Sterlington, the wife of his steward, David Sanders.

She does not then know that she is the lawful wife of Sir Jules, but she intimidates him by threats, and in time is installed in Cressy Hall, as has been stated. Once there he finds it very hard to be rid of her.

And now has come the explosion. She has been working while he suspected nothing.

She has become able to force him to declare her to be his wife. The musing of Sir Jules recurred incessantly to this fact, and to the interview related in the preceding chapter.

But while he fumes and scowls in his solitary meditations, a strange thought springs into his mind.

A few days before the unmasking by Julia, a stranger, a lady artist of extraordinary genius as a portrait painter, and extraordinary beauty as a woman, had located herself in Little Ullsworthy. Sir Jules soon heard reports of this marvel, whose magic pencil could not, with all its skill, produce on canvas her equal in beauty, and he became eager to see her.

As some of the Cressy portraits needed re-touching he had an excellent excuse for visiting this Mrs. Hayland.

Sir Jules found her as report had said—peerless, but, despite her black hair and black eyes, as astonishingly like Julia that he was amazed. Much more youthful, in truth not more than twenty-two or three, but in her matchless complexion, her faultless form, her exquisitely lovely features, her grace of gesture, and her music of voice, she was wonderfully like Julia Sterlington when he wedded her under the name of Clarence Vereton.

There was a very slight French accent in the voice of this Mrs. Hayland, which his experienced ear had detected, and he said to himself:

"This lovely stranger is certainly of English blood, yet her education is French."

So, while seated alone in the room where we have seen him left by Lady Julia, the face, form and voice of this Mrs. Hayland suddenly rise up in his bewildered brain.

"Mrs. Hayland, and not Jerome, is my child."

He believed this suddenly conceived suspicion to be an inspiration. He glowed with a hope that the stranger was his child, his daughter. It was very possible that Lady Cressy was lying when she said their child was a boy. If she fled from her father's house, mad or sane, with one of the two infants, there was every reason to suppose that as a mother she took her own child with her.

"Mad or sane," muttered Sir Jules, "surely a mother would have snatched away her own child. By her own story, which may be true, she lost that child somewhere in France; it did not die, it was lost; and it was a girl. As likely as not my child was a girl. Now, that girl child being lost, Julia has resolved to palm upon me as my son, as her son, this Jerome Sanders, whom she adores, and whom I detest. If I can baffle her in that it will

be some triumph for me. Besides, this doubt is a vexation to me, for I am in love with this handsome Mrs. Hayland. My soul! it would not be quite the correct thing, even in the code of my morals, for a man to make love to his own daughter."

He trembled a little—a very little—base and bad he was, for of late he had been laying plans, and very cruel and wicked plans, to make the beautiful widow, Mrs. Hayland, his own. Had she been noble and wealthy, he would have tried to win her for a wife, for her beauty and grace had, at first sight, made him thrill with a desire to be beloved by her.

"And now this story told by Julia," he muttered, "has thrown a mountain of obstacle between me and my latest passion."

He hurried to *secretaire* at one end of the room, and opened a drawer in which he was wont to keep such articles and papers as he guarded with most jealousy care.

From this drawer he took a miniature portrait of Mrs. Hayland. Sir Jules had stolen—that is the word, stolen!—this miniature the day before from the studio of the beautiful young widow.

Sir Jules was not a man to hesitate to steal anything, especially a portrait of a woman whose beauty had fired his heart and brain.

"She painted it herself," he thought as he placed it upon a *table*, under the light of a candle, and gazed at it. "No truer copy of her beautiful face can be made. It seems instinct with life! Beautiful, charming! The face of Venus herself. What words can half express its bewitching loveliness! Well, let me study it now, and see if I can trace in it any feature of my own face."

Any feature of his face—his evil face in that of the portrait! But Sir Jules was withal a very vain man.

The night was very far advanced when he began to study this exquisite masterpiece of art, and he soon became absorbed in his admiring gaze. A few moments passed, when the same curtains which had hidden the witnesses of his interview with Lady Julian were again agitated by the presence of some one behind them.

The back of Sir Jules was towards the curtains, and he heard nothing. His heart and soul were deaf and blind to all but the beauty of the face upon which he gazed.

The curtains part in their centre, noiselessly, inch by inch, impaled slowly aside by two large hands as dark as bronze, as powerful as the paws of a lion. A man, tall and massive of chest, bearded to the brilliant, daring eyes—a man as lithesome as movements as a creeping leopard—glides barefooted over the soft, rich carpet towards the unsuspecting baronet.

The man pauses, listens, flashes his flaming glances to the right, to the left—everywhere. He seems assured that there are but two in that room—himself and the man at the table, who is gazing at something he holds in his right hand.

If this intruder is a robber he has the eager curiosity of a woman. He continues his noiseless advance towards the baronet, halts just behind him, and peers down.

He is so tall that he towers over the seated baronet like a stately tree over a diminutive shrub. His eyes fall upon the miniature; he trembles suddenly from head to heel; he snatches at the miniature; his left hand springs out over the shoulder of the baronet like a flying boomer, and in a flash clutches the portrait; his right hand at the same instant grasps the neck of the baronet, lifts him swiftly with a single jerk to his feet, twists him about with a single irresistible wrench of the iron fingers, and forces Sir Jules to look him full in the face—holds him thus and says hoarsely, while his eyes gleam like flame:

"Who gave you this picture, man? How came it here?"

"Loose me, scoundrel!" cries the baronet, who is no coward, his blood boiling with sudden and desperate rage.

He is half-stifled in that grip of steel, and his dainty white hands clutch in vain the wrist of his assailant.

The wrist is like a bar of iron. Sir Jules might sooner bend a bar of iron with his lady-like fingers than move that inexorable arm.

"Take your hand from my neck, ruffian!" cries the baronet as his hand glides into his bosom.

"Draw a weapon and I snap your neck-bone as I would a pipestem!" growls the stranger, glaring fiercely into the upturned eyes of the baronet, which glare defiance in return. "Keep that hand where it is. Move a muscle, utter a cry for help, and you are a dead man. This picture—how came it here? Speak!"

"What right have you to ask?" demands Sir Jules, with a bitter curse, hurled like a stone into the terrible face above him.

"What right, scoundrel! It is a portrait of my wife!" replies the intruder, hoarsely.

"Of your wife?" stammered the astonished baronet.

"Ay, of my wife."

"And who are you?"

"I am Captain Storme!"

CHAPTER XII.

Oh, what a tangled web we weave!
When first we practise to deceive!

by right heir-at-law of the baronetcy of Cressy. I am that son. The late baronet knew the claims of my family very well, and my father often told my mother that but for his friendship with the father of the late baronet, and the certain enmity that would ensue from a vexatious suit at law, he could establish readily his right. I see that you feel the slenderness of your claims. Why, man, a certain Colonel Mark Renfrew has as much right as you to be lord of Cressy Hall and its title—had he certain papers which you have taken care to place beyond his reach. It is well known that he will inherit after you, if you leave no heirs, and Childebert Storme come not forward."

"Captain Storme is an outlaw, and dare not come forward," replied Sir Jules, with a vindictive sneer.

"Captain Storme dares do anything. But first, tell me how you got this picture of my wife."

"Is it very long since you saw—ahem! Mrs. Storme?"

"She was never known by that name."

"Ah!"

"She never knew me by any name except that of Robert Hayland," replied the smuggler, gazing at the portrait. "It is five years and more since I saw her. Ah, Ossana, wife of my soul! Art thou ever lost to me! Was the story true they told me in France? Art thou dead—or wandering over the world seeking for me, as I have wandered seeking for thee? Had we never parted I should not now be an outlaw."

Some secret chord in the heart of the fierce man of the sea was powerfully touched, for he gasped a sob of agony of soul, pressed the portrait to his lips, and then stood gazing silently and fondly at the miniature.

Sir Jules, the icy-hearted man of the world, who could not recall the time when he had shed a tear, unless it were a tear of rage, stood eyeing him with cowering scrutiny, and dastily weaving a plan by which he might be rid of this dangerous rival for ever.

The smuggler soon crushed all softer emotion, and, turning fiercely upon Sir Jules, said, hoarsely and threateningly:

"How got you this portrait? Man, do not trifling with me. I did not come here to dispute your title to the baronetcy. I came to demand temporary refuge from the hounds of the law that are baying on my track. I'd rather be Captain Storme than have 'Sir' tacked to Childebert, and be such a man as you are. Had I desired what you usurp, I could have secured my rights years ago. Rest in peace, then, on that subject. I shall not disturb you there. In return answer my question."

"On my life," said the crafty baronet, blandly, "it is so very long since I received that portrait that I must consult more than my memory, which is very poor. I must look into my diary."

"Your diary?"

"One of them—each year has a separate volume, of course. I have kept a diary for—oh, many years—jotting down daily occurrences for future reference. A very good habit, my friend. I keep my diaries in this book-case—an elegant article of furniture it is. Ah, here they are, these small black volumes. Quite a library in themselves, eh? Let me see, what year did I receive that portrait? 1816?—1817?—ah—'18?—'19?—'20?—no—'21—ah—yes—perhaps it was in 1825."

He took from a book-case a small volume, originally a blank book, and feigned to be seeking for something he had written there.

The smuggler watched him with anxious eyes, his soul seeming to flame through them.

Could he have dreamed that the wife he loved so dearly, and whom he feared was dead—could he have dreamed that she was then, midnight though it was, painting in imagination, as she had been painting during that very day, his portrait from memory, as he had looked when she last saw him—the adored husband of her soul—what joy, instead of anxiety, had beamed in his deep blue eyes!

Had he suspected that the urbane, wily baronet was coining a lie and a series of lies to send him headlong across the seas, never to see that beloved wife again, what fury would have darted from those eager eyes!

"I was in America," began the baronet, blandly, "when I wrote this."

"No matter where you were—Europe, Asia, anywhere. Give me a clue finer than one of her own silken hairs of jet, man, and if she lives I will find Orania."

"I admire your devotion—you see I keep my diary in a cipher of my own invention, lest prying eyes might read—well, matters perfectly innocent, of course, but private—"

"Enough. I understand all that. My log-book is in a cipher of my own, too. Read."

"Yes—hum—let me see. I think I have the place—yes, listen."

"Havana—"

"How! Great Heaven! Havana!"

"I beg you not to interrupt me."

"Right. Pardon. Go on."

"HAVANA, Nov. 13.—Purchased a miniature portrait of a lady, in a second-hand picture store. Attracted by its rare and ravishing beauty."

The attentive smuggler sighed.

"Inquired its history of the shopkeeper. Picture left by a lady, the original of the portrait—"

"When? Ha! What year?" cried the smuggler, in a quiver.

"Patience! It is very annoying to be thus interrupted. It was in 1825."

"Little over a year ago! She was alive, and in Havana, little over a year ago!" almost shouted the sailor. "Hurrah! Orania was alive, and in Havana, little over a year ago—a year and two days! November 13th, you said—didn't you? Ha, ha, ha!"

Sir Jules grinned behind his diary as he saw the rejoiced smuggler dance with delight, and kiss the portrait madly; but fearing his shouts and loud speech might be heard, he said:

"Moderate your transports, my friend, or your noise may attract attention, and lead to your arrest, dead or alive."

"Right! I listen."

"Shopkeeper said the lady was in great want of means—portray hard to part with. I paid twenty doublings for it."

"That is all—unless you desire to hear my moralising reflections. It appears I was much affected, and wrote quite a romantic sermon here—"

"Away with that!" interrupted Storme, his blue eyes brimful of tears, for the image of his wife in poverty was before him. Can you not recall the name of the shopkeeper?—the name of the street?"

"My life! I could not fill my book nor my mind with such trifles," replied the baronet, smoothing his sand-coloured beard—an action in him that was like the coiling of a serpent. "Still, I will try my memory. It would be a brilliant effort, if I could remember. The name of the shopkeeper? Aha! I have it! No—he was lame."

"Good! He was lame."

"In the left foot—a club-foot—"

"Good! Lame—left foot clubbed."

"And cross-eyed. I am sure of that."

"Yes; one seldom forgets a cross-eyed person. Lame—left foot clubbed—cross-eyed. Why, I'd find him among a million," said Storme, eagerly.

"And named Sanchez Pe-Pe—Ah! Sanchez Pedron."

"Sanchez Pedron," repeated Storme several times. "I shall sooner forget my own name than that. By my heart!" he added, grasping the arm of the baronet. "I have seen the man—I know him well—by another name—the club-footed, cross-eyed picture debtor near the Theatre Tacon! You have the name wrong. His name is Pedro Antera. I saw him three years ago."

"Heavens!" thought Sir Jules. "I made all that description from my imagination, and here it appears such a fellow did exist, and was known to this ruffian!"

"Did you ask the shopkeeper the name of the lady who sold the picture?"

"Yes, and now I remember that I jotted down the name on the margin. Here it is—Mrs. Orania Haywood, or Haybarn, or—"

"Hayland?"

"That is it. My writing is a little blurred just here. Yea, Mrs. Orania Hayland. That was the name of—"

"My wife! It was my wife!" cried Storme, delighted. "Alive and in Havana a year ago! Sir Jules, from my very soul I thank you for this information. You have made me your debtor for life; not intentionally, perhaps; but I am none the less grateful on that account. You paid twenty doublings in gold for this picture, the picture of my wife. I have not time to tell you how I lost her, nor the heart to relate the story. She was but a girl, I may say, when I married her; calling myself Robert Hayland then. She never knew that my true name was Childeeric Storme. I won her love when I called myself Robert Hayland, and, somehow, I never told her differently. We had not been married a year when I was forced to leave her suddenly. I have never seen her since, and it's more than five years ago. Young as she was in years—not seventeen—she was a full-grown woman, even as this portrait shows. I must keep this. Name your price."

"My price! Pray accept it, Captain Storme, as a gift from me—the picture of your wife. Price, indeed!"

"I take no gift from you, who have offered ten thousand pounds for my capture, dead or alive," replied Storme, haughtily, and with all the stateliness of a king who rejects an alliance. "Here is a hundred-pound note; I pay you for the portrait."

He tossed the bank-note upon the table. Sir Jules smoothed his sand-coloured beard, and laughed slyly behind his delicate white hand. It tickled him deliciously to see how he had deceived this formidable rival for the baronetcy and the earldom

beyond—this devoted and jealous husband of a beautiful woman, who, if not the daughter of Sir Jules de Cressy, might yet be betrayed and won by him; and who, if the daughter of Sir Jules, should certainly be for ever separated from a fellow that had bearded him thus.

He laughed, too, in his mind as he glanced at the bank-note thrust cavalierly upon him for a picture he had stolen, and as he thought of the elaborate lies, devilish and apt, he had feigned to read from his diary.

"There is the money, Sir Jules, and the picture has been a profitable investment for you," remarked Storme as he replaced the miniature in his bosom.

"True! ha! ha! I wish all my ventures may be as profitable, Captain Storme."

"I am going, Sir Jules—going to seek for my wife."

"To Havana?"

"There first—to the end of the earth, Sir Jules, if she lives and has wandered so far. I ask you not to betray that Childeeric Storme has been in Cressy Hall—"

"Never! Rest assured of that, captain," exclaimed the baronet, and meaning all he said.

He hoped England would soon be rid of this dangerous claimant to the baronetcy, this devoted husband of the beautiful Orania Hayland, and that Captain Storme would soon be on the seas, and the seas on him.

"I shall never breathe that you have been here, or that I have seen you."

"Thanks. I am for Scotland—the pursuit has gone southward. Keep it in that quarter, Sir Jules. If I escape you will save ten thousand pounds."

"My life! I never thought of that. I shall take care to keep the pursuit towards London, Captain Storme."

"And muzzle that bloodhound, Mark Renfrew. He has seen me since sunset. He had not dared push his claims for your title and estate, because in proving his own he would have established mine, and he knew I was alive. He is a wary, cunning fellow. Beware of him. But that you have given me hopes that make my heart as light as a balloon, I could wish no better sport than to see you and him flying into law against each other. Farewell. From Scotland I go to Cuba. Heaven give success to my heart."

"One question, captain," said the wily baronet, eagerly, while his cruel eyes flashed with some fiendish thought, "it is reported that Captain Storme has sworn never to be taken alive, even if he has to blow his own brains out."

"That was when I believed my wife to be dead."

"Ah—then—ahem! Do you still adhere to that heroic determination?"

Storme gazed keenly at the cruel, sharp face of the speaker. With all his bold and even desperate courage the smuggler was a shrewd and wary man. He read that in the baronet's eyes which made him reply pointedly:

"I have changed my resolve; I believe my wife lives. If in the slightest peril, I shall surrender without a struggle and stand my trial."

"Ah!" thought the baronet, with difficulty hiding his chagrin, "if he had said he would not be taken alive, I would have set those after him who would riddle him with balls before sunrise. Egad! I would have led the pursuit myself. So let him go across the seas unmolested by me, and may Satan greet him before I see him again. Well, good luck to you, Captain Storme."

"Face the door, Sir Jules."

"Eh? Oh, very well," said the baronet, turning his back to the smuggler.

He stood thus several minutes, hearing nothing, and feeling rather unpleasant. At length he ventured to face about.

Captain Storme had vanished. He had departed as noiselessly as he had appeared, but far more rapidly.

"Egad, a good riddance!" said Sir Jules, rubbing his sore neck. "What a grip that ruffian had, on me!"

Having soothed his wounded vanity by fully five minutes of steady cursing, hurled at those who had disturbed his repose of mind, the baronet ran to one of the windows, opened it, and peered out into the darkness.

There was nothing to be seen but a cloudy sky and a sickly moon, and nothing to be heard except the sighing of the night breeze in the tall tree tops of the great Cressy Park; so after cooling his hot head and flushed face for a quarter of an hour, the baronet closed the window.

Standing before a large mirror, he gazed at himself smilingly, caressing his sand-coloured beard with his white, lady-like fingers, and thinking.

"Good luck to you, Captain Storme. It is some consolation to me in my rather tangled matrimonial and paternal affairs to reflect that you, at least, are out of my way, Childeeric Storme. I wonder why I

forgot to ask the ruffian his wife's maiden name, where she was born, and all about her. What an oversight! But I can readily extract all that information from Mrs. Hayland. He has no children, or surely they would be with the wife—the wife who thinks she is a widow. Egad! I must see to it that she does not forsake that belief. Decidedly, I am no longer believe that she can be my daughter. Bah! I was a fool to imagine so for an instant, and I am just as confident that this fair-faced grenadier of a Jerome Sanders is not my son. But," added Sir Jules, with a horrible grimace and grinding of his teeth, "it is very true that I have a wife, and that she is in this house."

With this last and very bitter reflection the baronet left the room in which he had experienced so much humiliation, and proceeded to his bedroom, where he found his Neapolitan valet-de-chambre awaiting his coming.

Being disrobed by that swarthy-faced individual—a fellow who is to appear prominently in our story hereafter—and left to his repose, Sir Jules sank gradually into a very disturbed sleep, haunted by horrible dreams, in which Lady Julia, Jerome Sanders, alias de Cressy, Eev. Charles Kinnore, alias Ned Logan, Captain Storme, his wife Orania, and Mark Renfrew, played fearful tricks upon him, aided and abetted especially by a certain nameless personage, who is commonly supposed to smell of sulphur and brimstone; and who, in the baronet's dreams, seemed particularly to delight in seizing him by the nape of the neck and thrusting his nose downwards into long-forgotten footprints of crime, each footprint blazing with these words in red flame:

"Jules Amour de Cressy did this! aha!"

Thus we leave him for the present, to look after the midnight adventures of David Sanders, whom we left flying like a madman from the presence of the worthy Dame Boxy.

(To be continued.)

THE FLOWER OF EL ALMEDA.

CHAPTER XI.

Plead with the seas and reason down the winds,
Yet thou shalt ne'er convince me. *Shakespeare.*

ABAL HASSAN was in a state of mind that can readily be conceived. For one of his temperament, he had received so many disappointments that he was indeed in a towering passion. Not only had two of his bravest men fallen, and his prisoners escaped, but his beloved child thanked Allah for it before his very face. Then, too, the dwarf had disappeared, and no trace of him was to be found, and he was tormented by the thought that he was the traitor to whom he owed all his defeats. He thought he knew well the evil disposition of Icasach, and that he gloried in wickedness that he would delight in the death of the Christians, instead of aiding them to escape. Had he done so? He would have expected any one in the castle more than him; but he was gone, and how could his absence be accounted for?

The prisoners were gone, and no trace of them could be found. The castle had been searched from turret to foundation-stone, and now his soldiers were scouring the country in the vicinity of the castle. But he had little hope of the search being successful, and, almost bursting with rage, he had retired to his own apartment, there to await the issue of events and the coming of Prince Bajaz and his train.

In this he would not be thwarted. If he had any scruples as to forcing Marina to wed with him, they had been all overcome by the part she had taken in the events which had transpired. That she loved the Christian knight there was no longer any reason to doubt, and for this alone she deserved no sympathy from him.

"Yes," he muttered to himself as he paced up and down his apartment, "she shall be the bride of Prince Bajaz without delay. To-morrow shall see her tied as fast to him as the holy man can do it. Fool that I have been to be led by her whims so long."

At this moment the slave who had before attended him entered, and prostrated himself before him.

"What now, slave? Dost thou bring me news of the missing captives?"

"Nay, oh, mighty Abal Hassan," returned the slave, again bowing low before him, for he had half risen to his feet again.

"What then? In the train of Prince Bajaz in sight, and hast thou come to summon me to go forth into the courtyard to receive him as becomes his noble worth?"

"Nay, my master," replied the slave, with another obeisance.

"What, then? Speak, or, by the beard of the Prophet! I will have out thy tongue by the roots!" cried the Moor, in a fury.

"A Christian messenger from Castile, oh, mighty Abal Hassan, is waiting at the gate. His is an errand of peace, for he carries a small white banner held aloft, and he has neither armour nor spear."

"Thou dost not guess his errand?"

"No, my master. No one has spoken with him yet, save to reply to his hail. Those at the gate wished to get thy orders before granting him admittance."

"Get thee at once to the courtyard, and say to the wardens that they give him entrance, without delay, and then see thou that he is conducted hither at once, that I may question him as to his errand."

Again the slave bowed low before his master, and then he hastened from the room, while Abal Hassan tried his best to compose himself, so that he could receive the messenger with calmness and befitting dignity. But a short time had elapsed before footsteps were heard returning, and in another moment the hangings of the doorway were pushed aside, and the slave, with his usual salutation, ushered the visitor into the room.

Abal Hassan looked up, and saw an unarmed Christian knight saluting him, so he returned the courtesy with a grave inclination of the head, and then waited for him to speak.

"To the great Abal Hassan, I have come on an errand of peace," said the stranger, with another salutation.

"Speak; Abal Hassan is ready to listen. On what errand dost thou come?"

"In behalf of a certain Christian, known as the Knight of the Cross, who, with his followers, were made prisoners of by thee, two days ago."

The brow of Abal Hassan darkened, as the other paused.

"Go on. What will you of them?" he asked.

"I have come hither on his behalf, to offer thee a just ransom for his liberty."

"And what art thou willing to pay?"

"Nothing, Christian."

"Wilt thou set him at liberty, then, for naught?"

"I cannot do it."

"And wherefore not?"

"Because he is no longer here."

"Hast thou, then, set him at liberty?"

"I did not send him forth, and, by Allah! I would not, had he been the King of Castile himself. But, by some treachery, he has made his escape from the castle."

The messenger stood with a puzzled look upon his face. He hardly knew what to think of this declaration on the part of the Moor.

"Art thou sure of this, Abal Hassan?" he said. "I have just come from the borders of Castile, and had he been at liberty and unharmed I must have known it."

"Dost thou doubt my word, dog of a Christian?" cried the Moor, in a fury. "If thou dost, get thee from this castle, before I so far forget myself as to have thee cast forth, even though thine errand is a peaceful one."

"Thou wouldst not dare to do that, Abal Hassan. To misuse me, coming with the white banner in my hands, would be to draw down the vengeance of Castile and thine own King of Grenada upon thy head. I am concerned for this knight in whose behalf I came, and I would not leave El Almeda behind me until I had better assurances of his whereabouts than thou hast given me."

"But I have told thee that I know not where he is. Would that I did, and he was in my power—he should die. I do mean it, by the Prophet's tomb! But treachery has aided him to escape, and he is gone."

"Thou wouldst hardly have taken his life if thou hadst known who he was."

"I care not. Were even the King of Castile himself in my power, and I saw that before my eyes that I have seen within the last two days, I would not spare him."

"Hast thou any thoughts as to whom this Knight of the Cross might be?"

"None; neither do I care."

"Perhaps thou wouldst but know his true name. But as he did not reveal it, that is his own matter. But this message I am to carry back will hardly satisfy those who sent me. They will demand the knight at thy hands, and if he be not forthcoming, thou wilt see thy castle besieged by an army of knights that will make thee tremble."

"Tremble! What dost thou mean, vain boaster? Was ever Abal Hassan known yet to tremble before a Christian? Go forth and say to those who sent thee, that El Almeda's walls are stout and strong, and that their owner bids them defiance. Go. Thy presence longer here can do no good."

The messenger did not use further words, he saw that they would be of no avail; so he bowed courteously to the irate Moor, turned upon his heel, and left the apartment. A few minutes later Abal Hassan heard the sound of his horse's hoofs as he galloped away from the castle.

The sound seemed to awaken him from a sort of reverie into which he had fallen when the messenger had left the apartment, and, rising to his feet, he resumed his walk up and down the room.

"By the beard of the Prophet! a pretty pass has this affair brought me to. I wonder where it will end. Thus far everything has gone against my plans; but the end is not yet. Prince Bajaz will arrive soon, and then I will try and cast all these matters out of my mind. Allah! how I would like to have that Knight of the Cross in my power again! Would I not have sweet vengeance upon him! I wonder who he is. The messenger would have me believe that he is of high rank, and that they would attempt to avenge his death, were no further trace of him found. Let them do it, if they will. Abal Hassan never yet flinched before danger, no matter how great the odds."

Again the footsteps of the slave were heard approaching, and he once more presented himself, with his usual profound obeisance.

"What now, slave?" demanded his master.

"Oh, mighty Abal Hassan, Icasach, the dwarf, is without, and would hold converse with thee."

"The dwarf?" cried the Moor, joyfully. "Now this mystery will be explained. Why did he not come hither at once, as was his wont? He used not to be ceremonious. Bid him enter at once."

The slave disappeared, and in a moment after the dwarf, with the most haggard expression possible upon his countenance, presented himself.

"By my faith, Icasach, thy face is almost that of a stranger to thy master. Come hither, and tell me why it is that I have not seen thee before this day."

The dwarf came forward much as a dog would have done whose master was displeased with him, and, seizing his hand, he kissed it again and again.

"Where hast thou been, Icasach? Speak! There is much that I would know, and at once!"

"It is a long story, oh, my master!" returned the dwarf. "I fear much that thou mayest be angry with me. Therefore, oh, mighty Abal Hassan, give me thy word that no harm shall come to me!"

"By my faith! this is a cool request for thee to make, slave! But tell me thy story first, and I will judge thee as thou deservest."

The dwarf hesitated.

"Go on!" cried Abal Hassan, bursting into a rage. "Speak! thou fiend of darkness! and tell me if thou knowest aught of the escape of the knight?"

"I do, my master," returned the trembling dwarf. "And where is he?" thundered the Moor.

"In Castile, oh, my master!"

"Dost thou know how he escaped?"

"Yes, oh, my master!"

"Then, in the name of the Prophet, speak! Open thy lips! or I will strike thee to the earth!"

Thus adjured, the dwarf began, and told all—from the time he followed the soldiers to the dungeons, to when he parted with the knight and his companion, on the borders of Castile, that morning, and he had permission from them to return to the castle.

Abal Hassan listened intently, and lost not a word that fell from the dwarf's lips. But as he went on, his brow grew as black as midnight, and gleams like flashes of lightning shot from his eyes. But not a word did he utter until he had finished, and the dwarf, prostrate before him, had again implored his pardon. Then he sprang from his seat, and, reaching out his hand for his scimitar, that was resting near him, he raised his arm, as though he was about to strike off the head of the culprit before him where he stood.

The dwarf cowered before him, as though he firmly expected his last moments had come, but suddenly his master seemed to change his mind, and letting his hand fall, he gave a signal, which brought the slave, who was waiting near, into the room.

"Go, and summon two soldiers, and bid them come quickly here."

"Pardon, oh, mighty Abal Hassan!" he cried, in agony. "I did but do that which I was compelled to. Be just, and do not take my life."

But Abal Hassan deigned him no other reply than a look of unutterable determination which he turned upon him, and soon the sound of footsteps warned them of the coming of the soldiers.

A moment more, and the soldiers stood within the apartment.

Abal Hassan pointed to the dwarf.

"Take him away, and confine him in one of the lowest dungeons of the keep. Place him next to the traitorous turnkey, and when we are more at leisure we will deal with them as they deserve."

The soldiers seized the form of the dwarf between

them, and hurried him away, and five minutes later the iron door of his cell had closed upon him.

CHAPTER XII.

There is no woman's sides
Can bide the beating of so strong a passion
As love doth give my heart: no woman's heart
So big to hold so much.

Twelfth Night.

SCARCELY had Abal Hassan disposed of the case of the dwarf, and the soldiers had taken him from the room, when a messenger came to say that a cavalcade, consisting of Prince Bajaz and his train, had been discovered from the walls, approaching the castle.

In a moment all the unpleasant occurrences of the morning were banished from his mind, and he devoted himself to carrying out the plan which had engaged his attention so long, and which he did not mean should miscarry from any neglect on his part.

That the prince should be his son-in-law within twenty-four hours he was firmly determined.

He knew that there was no unwillingness on the prince's part, and he meant there should be none on his daughter's.

Bent upon these thoughts, he ordered the slave in attendance to robe him in his richest attire, and when he had done so he went forth into the courtyard, where his men were drawn up, to give that welcome to the prince which his high station demanded.

Everything was in readiness, owing to the orders he had given, and there was nothing to do but await the arrival of the distinguished guest.

In due time the great gates of the castle were thrown open, and through them, in great state, rode Prince Bajaz, at the head of his train. As he dismounted from his steed, Abal Hassan went forward to receive him, and made him a profound obeisance, which was returned by his guest. Then Abal Hassan said:

"Thou art welcome, oh, mighty prince, to my poor castle. Enter and refresh thyself after thy long journey."

"Gladly, oh, Abal Hassan, I come to El Almeda. How has it prospered with thee; and is thy fair daughter well? Mine eyes have longed this many a day to gaze upon her."

"The Lady Marina is well, and will gladly receive thee. Come within, where we can more readily discuss this matter, after thou hast refreshed thyself."

The prince followed Abal Hassan within the castle, while the proper officers took charge of his train, and disposed of them according to their several stations.

It was near the noon-day meal, and ere long the feast was spread, and Abal Hassan and his guest conducted to the banquet-room. Here everything was displayed that could tempt the appetite, or the munificence of Abal Hassan could provide, and they feasted long upon the rich viands and the ruby wine.

When the meal was concluded, the host conducted his guest to the apartments which had been assigned him, and there the prince bade him remain while they held converse together.

Abal Hassan seated himself near his guest, and opened the conversation which he knew was nearest his thoughts.

"Hast thou come for thy bride, oh, prince?" he asked, coming to the subject at once.

"Thou hast guessed my errand aright," he commenced. "With thy consent, I hope to carry thy daughter with me to my palace on my return."

"And that thou hast, at once! It has long been the wish of my heart to see my daughter wedded to thee, and if thou willest, to-morrow she shall be thine."

"Naught is there that would give me greater joy," answered the prince. "But tell me, does she look upon my suit with more favour than she did when I last was here?"

"My daughter will be thy bride, at whatever time I say the word. She may have some girlish notions of wanting a younger lover, but we must pass them over. Only this morn I told her that thou wert coming to wed her, and bade her make ready accordingly. On the morrow, at whatever hour you choose, she will be thine."

"Tis well. If she be a little coy at first and turn from me, it will do no harm. By my faith, I think that I would rather like it than otherwise."

"Then you will be suited, great prince, for you will find her so," said Abal Hassan, grimly.

"So be it then. I think I know what arts to use to bring her to love me. I would have an interview with her at once, if you will but prepare her for my coming."

Emboldened by the wine he had drunk, Prince Bajaz forgot the rebuff he had met with on a former occasion, when he had sought a visit to his host's daughter.

Abal Hassan saw the mood he was in, and marked the boastful tone, saying to himself that Marina would soon humble him. Had it been any other suitor than the prince he would have been glad to

have seen her do it; but as it was, he hoped that he would succeed in inducing her to give her assent to the union, which he was determined should take place at whatever cost.

He did not care to face his daughter himself, and he had half a mind to send a slave to announce the visit of the prince; but he went himself, and found her sitting upon a divan, richly arrayed, as though for the very purpose of receiving the prince.

In a few words he announced to her the arrival of their guest, and that he wished an interview with her; adding that he hoped she would receive him as she should one who was so soon to be her husband.

"The prince may come, if he chooses, but thou knowest, oh, my father, my determination. Never of mine own will shall I espouse him."

"Marina, let mine ears hear no more of this," he said, sternly. "It is ordained that you shall be his; and who can war against fate? Receive him as you would one who is soon to be your husband; and if there are thoughts in your mind of the Christian knight, cast them from thee at once."

"There are thoughts that will not go at bidding, my father, and neither will love come unless it is sent."

"Thou wilt yet learn to love the prince, Marina."

"Never, my father. Sooner would I welcome the dark Angel of Death than him!"

"We will not dispute this point. Why resist fate? Thou wilt be his, and there is none that can prevent it."

Marina did not answer. She saw that words were useless, and therefore the conversation need not be prolonged. So she bowed her head upon her hands, and, leaving her thus, Abal Hassan turned and left the apartment.

For several minutes she sat thus, almost unconscious of what was passing about her. The crisis in her fate was coming. A few hours more, and it would be determined.

So heavy did the situation weigh upon her that she was almost unconscious of what was passing around her. Zara had not come back,—as her father desired her absence,—and she was alone. Thus buried in her own reflections, she did not hear a footstep that sounded half-muffled upon the carpet, or see the bulky form of Prince Bajas as he strode into the room.

For a moment the prince stood gazing upon her, admiring the beautiful contour of her form, and thinking how lucky he was in obtaining so beautiful an addition to his harem. Then summoning the most engaging smile he could to his naturally stern and repulsive countenance, he almost noiselessly approached the divan where she was seated.

Still with her head bowed down, and her mind full of painful thoughts of her position, and the love she felt for the Christian knight, whose fate she was unaware of, she gave no heed to the prince's approach, and it was not until he knelt at her feet and attempted to take her hand that she became aware of his presence, and, springing to her feet, she fled to the centre of the apartment, where she paused and turned her flashing eyes full upon him, with a look that should have made him sink, crestfallen, from the room.

The prince rose hastily to his feet, now that she had eluded him, and stood regarding her with a look of mingled rage and disappointment upon his face.

"Fair Marina," he said, at length, "Flower of El Almeda, forgive me if I did rudely disturb thee. I did but think to kneel to thee, and kiss the hand of my promised wife."

With these words he took a step towards her, as though he would draw her back to the seat from which she had arisen.

"Back, Prince Bajas!" she cried, reaching out her hand as though she would wave him off. "See that thou dost not come near me with thy hateful caresses. I am not thy wife yet, and Allah grant that I may never be."

A look of evil passion possessed, for a moment, the countenance of the prince, and then it gave place to a smile that was almost as repulsive.

"Thou art cruel to thy lover, fair Marina. This is hardly the greeting that he expected, after the days that have passed in which he has not seen thee."

"Thou art no lover of mine, Prince Bajas. Thou knowest well that I hate and despise thee—that a sight of thee fills me with alarm. Wherefore, then, dost thou persecute me with thy attentions? When thou wert last here did I not plead with thee, and frankly tell thee that I could never love thee as a wife should? Prince Bajas, if there are the feelings of a man within thy heart, thou wilt leave the castle on the morrow, and not seek to accomplish the errand on which thou hast come."

"Fair Marina, dost thou think that I would let so such a prize as thee slip through my fingers? Thou shouldst have known me better. Since plain speak-

ing is in order, and as thou hast had thy say, I will have mine. There is nothing on earth that can make me relinquish my quest. This opposition on thy part doth only make me the more eager to possess thy hand. I have thy sire's sanction, and that is all I need. To-morrow's sun shall see thee my bride; so wherefore this useless opposition now?"

Again he took a step towards her, and once more she retreated.

"Back, Prince Bajas!" she cried. "Come not nearer to me. I shudder as I would were the Death Angel to lay his hand upon me. Go from this apartment. I would no longer have thy presence here to-day."

"Cruel Marina, why wilt thou thus banish me from thy presence? I will not—I cannot—obey thy cruel mandate."

With these words he again advanced, and would have caught her in his arms had she not, quick as thought, drawn a small dagger from her breast, and held it above her own heart.

"Another motion in this direction, prince, and I will lie a bleeding corpse at thy feet!" she cried.

And he, fearing from the determined look upon her face that she would carry her threat into execution, retreated backwards, hastily.

"Let the Flower of El Almeda do herself no harm," he cried, "and I will obey her wishes."

"Then leave this apartment at once, and let me have the little time that remains to me to be passed alone. It is but a few hours at the most; for, from my father, I learned that I must wed with thee on the morrow."

"Fair Marina, thou shalt be obeyed. Fare-thee-well until to-morrow."

And, bowing low, he turned and left the apartment.

(To be continued.)

MYSTERY OF THE BLACK DIAMOND.

CHAPTER XLIV.

WHEN the false Sir Jasper pushed her Miss Miggs fell at full length upon the stones, and one of them cut her temple and stunned her.

A crowd soon gathered, and just as they were lifting her insensible form a carriage drove past, and then turning came back. Its occupants were Lady Lowndes and Sir Jamieson, her husband.

Eleanor had recognised the governess as they passed, and took immediate possession of her, she and Sir Jamieson supporting her tenderly between them as they drove to Lowndes House, to which they were returning after a brief sojourn at a friend's.

Sir Jamieson looked like a prince. Eleanor's face wore an expression of serenity beyond description. Both were wearing mourning.

Madam, in the midst of her most bitter persecutions of the young pair, had been thrown from her carriage and instantly killed. They were wearing black for her, but it may be imagined that their grief could not be excessive.

Poor little Miggs. Of a slender and delicate organisation, the anxiety and excitement over night, followed by this last brutal blow, brought on an attack of brain fever, which, though not pronounced especially dangerous, deprived her of the use of her mental faculties for two weeks.

The instant she could speak and think she told her story. Before that time, Hubert, who had been tricked into a separation from his mistress at the station, had done a very sensible thing. He had gone to the young countess's lawyers, and told all he knew. But it was not much that was worth following as a clue, though suspicious and alarming, for Sir Jasper Townley, it was thoroughly ascertained, was dead. Therefore this man, who had claimed to be the baronet, must have done so with some sinister design upon Lady Violet.

Several competent men from Scotland Yard were put upon the business, and their energies stimulated with the promise of large rewards in case of success.

Nothing of importance had been discovered, except the whereabouts of the little governess, and her restoration to an intelligent state of mind was eagerly waited for.

Captain Evelyn had come hurrying up to town on the first alarm, and Eleanor only waited to talk over matters with Miss Miggs before she sent him to give a full explanation.

"I am sure my darling girl loved him, and I believe she meant to tell him the whole truth," Miggs said, feebly, from the pillow she had tried to lift her head off and failed. "If he will come, we will tell him. He may find in it all some clue to this dreadful mystery."

"I think you are right," said Eleanor. "It is only

just to her that we three, who love her so, should sit in council upon her fate. I would go on my knees to find her, if that would avail, for I feel that much of the woe which has shadowed her generous, sweet life has come through me."

There were tears in Eleanor's eyes as she spoke.

The handsome guardsman had grown haggard with the cankered care of the last two weeks. He looked as though he had not slept for a month.

Miggs being too feeble, Eleanor took upon herself the telling him that strange mystery of Lady Violet's young life. She approached the subject carefully, and was agitated violently in spite of all her efforts to be calm.

Captain Evelyn interrupted her before she had said a dozen words, his cheek fevered and his eyes flashing.

He put a few rapid and half-incoherent questions. Then suddenly he smote his forehead with his clenched hand.

"Oh, great Heaven!" he cried, between agony and rapture. "I see it all now! I was Conway's masked companion that night; not Sir Jasper Townley. I was madly in love with Beatrix Duvudant, or imagined I was, and when she demanded, as the price of her favour, that I should become friends with my kinsman, as she called Conway, I yielded and joined hands with a man who had twice attempted my life some years before. Conway, with his false tongue, talked me out of that youthful impression concerning him. I believe he actually persuaded me that it was all a mistake somehow. I was seven years younger than he, and half-crazed besides by the way Beatrix Duvudant played me off against other fellows, and other fellows against me. She was always doing odd things, and when Conway pretended she had agreed to marry me in that queer way, I was idiot enough to fall into the trap. He managed the affair very cunningly, too. I never discovered how I had been cheated till I went to see Beatrix the next day. I went from her to Conway, and I forced the truth—all that he knew of it—out of him at the point of the sword. He said I had married Grace Elroy, and I was so shocked when I learned that she had been burned to death the very night of the marriage that I entirely forgot the fact that her death made me a free man once more."

"Grace Elroy was Daisy Dupont," said Eleanor, in extreme agitation; "she did not die at that time, as you and he supposed."

And then she gave him the main points of that strange imposition with which poor Daisy had cheated even Conway.

"I see now," said Evelyn, "that one of his objects was to entangle me before Lady Violet and I met. He foresees a more than common interest between us. How singular that the very measures he took to sever us for ever should instead have been the means of uniting us."

He rose from his chair, and stood a moment, his handsome face transfigured with emotion.

"I go to find my wife now," he said, solemnly, "and as surely as there is a God in Heaven He will help me!"

Little Miggs was crying.

"What will you do first?" asked Eleanor. "You must leave us some anchor on which to hang our hopes."

"I shall find Conway the first thing. He is so bad and black-hearted a man that even though we can imagine no motive for his doing this, I believe it is he, and no other. He alone knew that it was Sir Jasper's ring—temporarily in my possession—which I put by mistake on the marriage finger of my masked bride; and it must have been that knowledge which suggested to him the ruse of sending a man to represent himself to Lady Violet as the baronet."

"But what object could he have now?" asked Eleanor, with an involuntary shudder at the remembrance of her last meeting with Conway.

"Heaven knows! Revenge, perhaps, on her and me at the same time."

"Surely, he would not dare to harm her!" uttered Eleanor, with another shiver. "He is an utterly unscrupulous man, you know as well as I do."

"Do you want to drive me mad?" cried Captain Evelyn, suddenly, in tones of agony. "Pardon, my lady, but I must keep my senses now."

Eleanor said no more.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE Rue l'Epinard in Paris has still a few aristocratic-looking mansions. There is one with a fountain in front, a broad marble colonnade on two sides, a quadrangle paved in squares of red and white marble, which the residents of that quarter will point out to you yet as where the crazy Englishman lived.

The crazy Englishman was Vane Conway; and this is the reason they called him crazy: Whether he paced between the tall white columns which

guarded two sides of his residence, or leaned by the fountain, or sat at a window, he was always talking—not exactly to himself, for he had the manner of a man addressing some one, but—certainly to no visible companion.

It was impossible to come near enough to hear much of what he said, for the instant any one approached he would either make a gesture of silence to his invisible companion, or he would say, sharply, "Hush, Daisy."

He lived alone in the great still house, paying his rent promptly, and having his meals sent in from a neighbouring restaurant. An old woman came twice a week, and did anything that was needed in the house, and curiosity obtained no satisfaction concerning him from her. Knowing nothing, she could tell nothing.

We who are privileged may enter the mysterious precincts of the house in the Rue l'Epinard.

It was an afternoon six weeks after the discovery by Captain Evelyn that the woman he had adored hopelessly nearly seven years now was his wife.

In all that six weeks he had not found her, though he had not obtained one clue to her, though he had searched with the fierce craving of a long-starved love, of a maddening anxiety; though he had bent every energy of his strong, energetic, resolute nature to the work.

He had help too. But, as the pretended Sir Jasper had so nonchalantly assured Lady Violet, there is a great deal more romance than reality about the detective business.

Upon this afternoon, then, Conway was pacing his lonely quadrangle.

He had just come in. He was dressed with elegance and scrupulous care, well-fitting gloves upon his hands, a hat of the latest style upon his head. His silky hair shone in the sun, and his beard rippled too in the golden light.

He looked more like the Conway first introduced to the reader than at any time since his return from Australia.

He spoke, and what he said was of the nature of a reply, delivered in the half-sulky tone peculiar to him when he was out of humour.

"I am not an idiot, and consequently shall not go to Drumencette. Didn't I tell you Evelyn was on my track?"

A pause, during which his eyes rested on the thin air beside him with a mocking glitter, as though he listened to something not pleasant. Presently he turned on his heel, with a scowl and a laugh.

"Let her starve then. She is neither wife nor sister of mine. I gave her her choice to live worshipped, or die hated. Don't kneel to me, woman," pausing and looking at thin air again. "You know I haven't a soft heart. Besides, if you had the spirit above anything but a worm, you would hate the woman whom I love as I never did you; whom I worship as I never did my Maker; at whose feet I would die in tortures for the sake of one kiss from her balmy lips. When she looks at me, in her queenly rage, it is as though a sweet fire consumed me. When she speaks——"

At this moment the great bell of the entrance hall, a ponderous affair for a mere residence, clanged sharply.

Conway stopped, lifting his hand with a gesture for silence.

"It is he," he whispered, "he has found me at last."

After a long, thoughtful pause, during which the bell continued to sound, he went and opened the door.

It was indeed Captain Evelyn, pale as death, his strong chest heaving with agitation.

"Oh! Is it possible? Have I found you?" he said, in a terrible voice, and advanced towards the other with his sword drawn and gleaming in his hand.

Conway slowly retreated before him through the great dusky hall, back into the mosaic paved court. There he stopped and faced him, supporting himself by the wall.

"Where is she?" cried Captain Evelyn, hoarsely.

"Speak before I murder you."

A livid change passed over Conway's face; but his eyes blazed forth defiance.

"No," he said, with a horrible sneer, "and you will never find her."

The soldier's features twitched convulsively. The foam of a maddening rage seemed to flock his lips.

"She is where," pursued the wretch, whose throat the sword-point by this time touched. "She is where my death will be her doom. Try it. I don't think I care much about living in any case."

Evelyn's sword dropped ringing upon the pavement. The thought of death for that glorious young creature had overpowered him. But in a moment he rallied again. He was calmer, cooler.

"Tell me where my wife is; you see I know all at last," he said, his voice thrilling. "Where is she

who never harmed you?—she whose demon of evil you have been so long? Give her to me, and we will forgive all."

"Never!"

"If she is here, I will find her," exclaimed Evelyn, glancing about him with set lips.

"There is no one here but myself and my wife," said Conway, in a strange voice.

"Your wife?" cried Evelyn, and sprang into the wide, dim hall again. He ran into one room after another on the ground-floor, all with a musty, disused atmosphere. Then he mounted the stairs of some light polished wood, and went along another hall like the lower one. Several doors stood open on this landing, the rooms to which they conducted being handsomely furnished, but bearing no appearance of occupancy; only in one quite at the end of the passage, where there was on a table a box of cigars, and about the floor some ends of those which had been smoked.

He heard a voice behind him, and turning saw Conway. His face had a singular, corpse-like hue, and he was smiling horribly.

"I told you there was no one here but Daisy and me," he said. "Ask her. I haven't the least objection in the world to your asking her," and he smiled again in a way that made the soldier's blood turn cold.

"What do you mean?" he demanded, in agony. Then added, with terrible solemnity, "If one hair of my darling's head has come to harm, you shall expiate it as man never expiated a wrong before."

To his astonishment, Conway turned his head partly over his shoulder, and spoke in a low, threatening voice, addressing some one, it seemed.

Evelyn caught but one word—Daisy—and changed his position to see her standing, as he supposed, in the gloom behind her husband. But no one was there.

Conway met his bewildered look with another freezing smile.

"I'll lay you a thousand to one," he said, "you can't even make her speak to you."

"Her? Who?"

"My wife."

"I should like to try," Evelyn said, defiantly. "If she knows where her sister is she will tell me, if you do not hinder her."

"Go on. I've nothing to say."

Evelyn looked incredulous, but he said:

"Will you tell me where I may find her then?" Conway looked up with a lightning-like gleam.

"Who do you call this?" with a toss of his head in the direction in which Evelyn had looked for Daisy; and then, with a sneer, "Mrs. Conway, I have the honour of presenting to your acquaintance Captain Evelyn, of Her Majesty's Guards."

Evelyn stared with all his eyes, and Conway began to tremble.

"Well?" he questioned, irritably. "What are you staring at?"

"Nothing," said the captain, in a subdued tone; "nothing at all. It's a poor jest."

"Do you mean to say you don't see her—that you don't see Daisy—my wife—standing here beside me?" demanded Conway, in an unsteady voice.

"I see no one but you. There is no one here but ourselves."

Conway caught at the balustrade behind him, swaying like a drunken man, his eyes fairly starting from their sockets.

"Don't say that, oh, Heaven! don't say that," he cried. "I hated her—she drove me wild hanging about my neck and kissing me; but I never meant to kill her—I didn't kill her. What do you know about it?" he demanded suddenly, straightening himself, and looking at Captain Evelyn with dogged daring.

The captain was very pale. He thought Conway had gone mad, and he shuddered to think of her he loved being in his power. His raving talk about killing turned him sick with fear and anguish.

"Conway, in Heaven's name tell me, where is Lady Violet?" he burst forth, in desperation.

"Do you suppose I would?" Conway responded, with a dark scowl. "You've had the winning hand of me all my life. You'll be Lord of Evelyn, and you'll have the fortune I always meant to have, and should have had, too, if the fates hadn't cursed me from my birth. But you can't have her. Dead or alive, she's mine now. It's my turn now, my man."

"She is alive, then?" ejaculated Evelyn.

That was something, after the terrors that had just overwhelmed him.

"She was the last time I went," the wretch said, coolly. "I go to her once in two weeks only, and I leave her enough food each time to last her, with economy, a week. I'm starving her to it. I mean to own her body and soul before I've done. So that hurts, does it?" as a groan forced itself through Evelyn's ashy lips. "I'm glad it does. I know precisely how it

feels. I've stood and watched you make love to her at the Cliffs till my blood was like red-hot lava. I ought to have given you a dose then, but I kept all for Daisy. Poor child, she died in a madhouse. Did you know that? And she loved me to the last. She died blessing the villain who set fire to her brain. Ah, that was love for you. The other will never love me so if I rack her with torture for a million of years."

Captain Evelyn stood clutching and unclutching the handle of his sword. Upon his brow great beads of moisture stood. He had never been a slow-tempered man, and the only thought that kept his hand from the throat of Conway now was the thought of the danger or death it might bring down on her—his darling. For aught he knew she was concealed in some inaccessible apartment or dungeon of this great, gloomy house, at the absolute mercy of a madman, or worse.

Should he fall upon him, and search him for a clue to her prison? Should he try to strangle the truth out of him?

He felt intuitively that it would be in vain. Conway's natural cowardice was overcome now by that cunning and obstinacy which is a feature of most madmen. He would die, perhaps, with the secret of her concealment unrevealed, and in after-years some one would come upon a locked cell and find only the skeleton form of her who had been Lady Violet.

The thought was unnerving.

He turned, and began pacing the hall to still his excitement.

Conway stood with folded arms, and a sneering face, regarding him.

It was beyond mortal endurance.

Evelyn reached the stairs with a bound; he cleared them in two more. He fled the house and temptation as he would have fled a pestilence.

A French *bonne* was standing at the gate of the next house, holding a child by each hand, and watching him as he came out.

He stopped, on a sudden impulse, and extended his hand with a gold sovereign on the palm.

"I will give you this," he said, in French, "and you shall tell me all you know about that house which I have just left. Is it a bargain?"

"Ah, but," said he, smiling and paling at the same moment, "it is so little I know, monsieur. They say the poor Englishman is haunted by the ghost of his dead wife—I don't know. Mother Fadette, perhaps—"

"Who is Mother Fadette?"

"She serves monsieur, the Englishman."

"Where can I find her?"

The good-natured *bonne* told him. It was not far; and tossing her the sovereign, he walked briskly away.

Mother Fadette was found readily; but she was old and deaf. Her hearing having been quickened with a couple of gold pieces, and her memory stimulated by two more, she acknowledged that her employer had been in the habit of being absent a few days at a time, once in two or three weeks.

Lady Violet was not at the house in the Rue l'Epinard then, Evelyn thought; for once that villain had told the truth.

Upon being questioned further, the old woman remembered to have heard her employer mutter one word, in connection with these absences, several times. The word was Drumencette. Evelyn gave her a handful of sovereigns on the instant, for he imagined he had got a clue at last.

It took him two days to find where and what Drumencette was—two days with his heart sick, and his brain fevered with fear for his darling. What might not have happened in those two days! But at last, after the lapse of another day, he found himself in the little Belgian town of which Drumencette was a sort of appendage—a castellated ruin, not in the guide-books, and therefore seldom visited by tourists. It was a rambling, crumbling structure, with four towers still standing, but looking so ready to tumble, so shaky and uncertain, that Evelyn's heart sank again. Surely, here was no place to look for his lost darling! He had brought a guide with him, a lusty young fellow, but he shrank back when on the verge of the crumbling masonry, and, though it was broad day, could not be induced by money or threats to a step farther.

He assured monsieur that the walls were in danger of falling at any moment, and that the north tower was haunted.

Evelyn turned pale at that—pale with excitement. The guide assured him solemnly that he had himself been near enough to hear the clanking of chains, and moans, as of a lost spirit in torment.

The frenzied soldier waited for no more, but darted away.

The north tower was the tallest of the four, and the most dangerous of approach. The winding staircase

was so crumpled, in places, that one seemed literally to hang between heaven and earth. But Evelyn saw nothing save the dizzy summit; or, if he shuddered involuntarily at the perils of the way, it was because he thought of her.

Half-way up, a shout from the guide reached him, and, looking back, he saw, through a broken place in the wall, Conway mounting swiftly behind him; and even at that distance he could see that his face had the same strange, corpse-like whiteness he had seen on it once before.

He redoubled his own efforts. He reached the top, and found himself on a sort of landing, upon which a door, studded with nails of tarnished brass, opened.

He tried it. It was locked. He shook it with both hands, and called Lady Violet's name loudly.

All was silent at first; then he heard a single sound that recalled the guide's words. He heard the faint clanking of a chain—nothing else. His heart stood still.

CHAPTER XLV.

EVELYN waited. He called again, but nothing answered him, and then, suddenly, his enemy bounded upon the platform beside him. Deadly hatred shone in the eyes of the two men at this moment, that baleful glitter that seems rather of the lower world than of this.

They clutched each other in silence. It was a still, desperate, horrible struggle, in which death itself looked out from each gleaming face, as they writhed to and fro, advancing, receding, hanging over the very verge of the dizzy height where the stone balustrade had completely crumbled away.

Suddenly Conway's demon grip relaxed; he staggered against the wall, and stood glaring at his antagonist, and thin air alternately, with the same chill, freezing look he had worn at the house in the Rue l'Epinaud.

"Two to one is a little too much, if one is a woman," he said, with a savage oath; "but I might have known even Daisy would turn against me in the end. Here goes my last card!"

He wheeled, produced a key, and unlocked the door with the brass studding, with a lightning-like movement. As it fell open, Evelyn leaped past him, with a smothered cry.

A single couch was all the furniture of this bare octagonal apartment. Upon it was stretched the wan, attenuated shape of Lady Violet. She neither spoke nor moved as they came in, but lay like sculptured marble, her graceful limbs composed as in slumber, her eyes closed, the inky labes prone against the sweet cheek, that had lost its roundness now, and was rigid and cold as snow.

Evelyn fell on his knees beside her, uttering wild cries, and gathering her cold hands to his bosom. A chain rattled as he did so.

One little wasted wrist was clasped with links of steel, which led to a ring fastened in the floor, the object being evidently to prevent approach to the windows. The wretched young lover-husband rose to his feet, with a look of desperate and deadly resolve.

He glanced about the room with eyes that were two flames. But Conway had vanished.

Still with that look of mingled frenzy and determination, he passed to the door. What he saw there stilled even the mighty wrath swelling his heaving bosom. Conway, with his eyes fixed on vacancy, his face of a ghastly, greenish hue, and walking with the slow, gliding movement of a sleep-walker, was crossing the narrow stone landing, making for that very point from which the balustrade was gone.

For his life Evelyn could not have stirred; and to the last day of his life he never forgot the still, awful look that was in the doomed man's staring eyes, as he glided past him, on, straight to the giddy edge of the landing. There he paused a single instant, struggling as though in the grasp of invisible hands. His body twisted one way, his face turned back over his shoulder, and his eyes supplicating Evelyn with an agony that seemed to force them from their sockets.

His feet trod air at the same moment, and he went down with that look on his face, and one shriek for mercy on his freezing lips.

Involuntarily Evelyn listened and almost fancied he heard the awakening thud of the fall below.

He thought not, in that awful moment, of going to the edge and looking over. Instead, he went back like a man in a horrible dream to the side of his starved, dead wife.

Was she dead? Was death ever so beautiful as that?

There was a water-jar in the room, but he groaned again as he lifted it and found it empty. Then he thought himself of a flask of some cordial he had

brought with him, and lifting her head to his shoulder, tried to force some drops between those locked lips.

He was rewarded by a faint moan. She lived!

He drew one long, gasping breath of rapture as he laid her back upon the pillow, waited a little, and gave her a few more drops of his cordial.

Then he looked about him for something with which to break the chain on her little wrist before she should be recalled to life and the remembrance of all she must have suffered. There was a rusty bolt hanging by two rusty rivets. He wrenched it off the door, and inserting it in the ring of the padlock which held those cruel links, was fortunate enough, between strength and skill, to force it open. He let the chain fall upon the stones, with a cry of joy, and put some more cordial between those still lips.

She opened her eyes; she looked at him with an angelic smile.

"Am I in Heaven?" she asked, and closed them again.

Poor Evelyn's manliness began to quiver, tears started in the soldier's brave brown eyes.

He waited; then he tried to give her some more cordial, but his hand trembled so that he could hardly hold the mouth of the flask to her lips.

She looked at him again with a bewildered head, trying to lift her head. She raised the little hand from which he had just broken that wicked chain, and suddenly she cried out sharply, in a frenzy, as it were:

"I am dreaming again. Go away from me, go, go, sweet, cruel dreams, which only make waking more bitter!"

The soldier's heart beat wildly; but he had the self-control to remain silent, wisely too, for life still hung by a thread.

"I dreamed that I heard his voice outside my prison; I thought he had come to save me at last," said Lady Violet, in a sad, musing tone, "and then, in my dream, I fainted, and—Why, the door is open. Oh, oh, oh!"

He helped her when she tried to sit up, and she looked at him strangely, as people in a delirium look at those they love best without knowing them. Then she put up her hand slowly and touched his face, and all at once the tears burst from her eyes in floods, and she lay on his bosom like a tired infant nestling to the maternal breast.

Evelyn held her close. It seemed to him he could never let her go from his arms again, and he was in danger of crushing her feeble form in the ecstasy of his joy.

She lay very quiet, and looking at her he saw that she had fainted again.

"Wretch that I am!" he said, "to forget how weak she is. At least she shall never open her eyes in this infamous place again!"

And then lifting her—she had grown light as a child—he carried her out, and down the crumbling stairway.

The guide had run away at first, in a fright, when he saw Conway walk off the tower; but he was in sight, coming with a troop of men and women behind him, and by his side two gendarmes.

"This is he who went up the tower first," said the guide where he saw Evelyn.

The soldiers at that passed one upon each side of him, and each laid a hand on his shoulder.

"There has been a man killed," said one, when Evelyn looked at them angrily. "You must go with us."

Captain Evelyn, flushed with exertion and happiness moment before, turned as white as death now, and glanced helplessly down at the wan face on his bosom. What would become of her if they tore him away? But he resolved to be calm if he could, to reason with them.

"I had no hand in the death of that man," he said. "He was mad, and threw himself off the tower. Jean there saw that he did it himself if he saw anything."

The gendarmes only repeated:

"Monsieur must go with us till it is examined into."

Captain Evelyn repressed a groan.

"At least I may place this lady, just resuscitated from a madman, where she will have the care and attention she needs. You may see for yourselves that she is at death's door."

"We have no orders," said the soldier in charge.

"What must I do then?" demanded Evelyn, angrily.

"We have no orders but to bring monsieur," was the imperturbable response.

"Move on, then," and gathering the slight, unconscious form of his wife closer, Captain Evelyn started.

His captors exchanged glances of doubt and perplexity, but the captain's stern and lion-like mien

intimidated them, and they marched him on in silence.

Fortunately it was not far.

The still form the prisoner bore had not stirred when they reached their stopping-place.

But the gallor's wife was a kind, motherly woman, and Captain Evelyn, seeing he could do no better, passed his precious charge to her, though it was like tearing his heart-strings to have that worshipped face go from his vision.

(To be continued.)

OUR STOCK OF ARMS.

SOME light is thrown upon the question as to the number of serviceable arms in store, by the publication of the annual account of the several manufacturing establishments under the War Department for the year 1868-69.

The rate of progress made in the manufacture of guns during the last two years is significant. At the Royal Gun Factories, Woolwich Arsenal, there were 2,294 cannon made, at a total cost of £10,833/-, in the first year; but all these muzzle-loading guns, with the exception of one 7-pounder, were ordered before the present Government came into office. They consisted of 66 9in. wrought-iron 12-ton guns; 62 7in. 6½ tons; 50 7in. 7 tons; 40 9in. 12 tons; 81 8in. 9 tons; and others of smaller calibre. At the Royal Ordnance Factories, Portsmouth, only 4,373/- was spent in manufacturing guns; 1,184/- for conversions, alterations, &c., and 7,784/- for repairs.

Coming to small arms, we find that at Enfield Small Arms Factory there was 186,492/- expended on the production of arms in the year ended March 31st last year, and these included 11,303 smooth-bore muskets, 27,308 rifles pattern, 53 converted breech-loaders on Snider's principle; 7,578 short rifles so converted, and 32,400 naval rifles also converted. Besides these, 22,340 artillery carbines were converted to breech-loaders on Snider's principle, and 2,164 cavalry carbines. There appear also to have been 500 sergeants' smooth-bore fusils manufactured; but only six of Martini-Henry's, and these were specially done for experimental purposes, at a cost of 48/- 10s. each.

Something like 20,000/- was absorbed in the maintenance of the Royal Small Arms Factory in Birmingham in the year under review, but it does not appear that a single rifle was manufactured or converted. A few muskets, carbines, and pistols were repaired, re-stocked, and finished, and a few dozen swords and bayonets were furbished up; but virtually this factory was at a standstill through the entire year, and the Parliamentary vote does not justify the conclusion that any more activity was visible in this factory in the year lately closed. Altogether not more than 8,640/- was expended in labour in the factory in the year.

At the Gun Wharf, Devonport, there were, of course, no arms manufactured, and the work done in the workshops there was of the most meagre character. The principal items charged in this account are for gaging and cleaning a few thousand shot and shells for breech-loaders.

With regard to our stock of gunpowder, if we may judge from the quantity manufactured at the Royal Factory at Waltham Abbey, scarcely sufficient to provide for the ordinary practice of the volunteers was made in the year under review. Some 6,000 barrels of fine grain and 10,000 barrels of large grain powder, with 372 barrels of rocket composition, constitute the production of Waltham Abbey. Manufactures of other descriptions for the army are found in similarly low proportion. At the Royal Laboratory at Woolwich, the largest item in the year's expenditure (£10,989/-) was for "proving, examining, and packing stores after manufacture." There are items innumerable for "experiments." A sum of 64/- is put down for expenditure in torpedo experiments. There is also an item of 2,315/- as expenditure on experimental special material for the Ordnance Select Committee.

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN.—We regret to learn that the Queen still suffers at times severely. The cares and labours incident to her exalted position are at present increased by personal anxiety for the safety of many nearly related to her Majesty; the Prince Consort's only brother, and the husbands of two of the Queen's daughters are in the German army at the seat of war. These causes combine to inflict suffering on a nervous system at all times most sensitive to worry and anxiety. Travelling under arrangements so careful as her Majesty does, the physical fatigue of a journey to Scotland is trifling, while the benefit her Majesty experiences from the cool pure air and quiet of her Highland home is always great and decided.—*British Medical Journal*.

THE LONDON READER AND LIFE AND FASHION.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ELEANOR's handwriting is very good.

B. W.'s offer is declined with thanks.

W. W. W.—A pretty sentiment, too feebly treated.

A. M. D.—It is impossible to judge without a perusal.

JENNIE.—The handwriting is very nice; almost unexceptionable.

SAILOR JACK—Marks made on the skin by tattooing are irremovable.

S. G.—The announcements are inserted for the accommodation of our subscribers, free of expense.

J. GRAY.—That which you wrote for has not appeared in THE LONDON READER.

ELIZA F.—Fresh air, moderate exercise, and a cold bath in the morning, are the only harmless cosmetics.

GEO. W.—Apply to the Civil Service Commissioners, Cannon Row, Westminster.

B. W.—We are obliged by your communication. We should, however, be unable to look at the MS. at present.

R. J. C. M.—From passage to Queensland, Australia, are granted in certain cases. Information can be obtained at 32, Charing Cross, London.

J. H.—You should apply to the publisher who issued the almanac for the current year; he may be able to give you information about the back numbers.

T. M. L.—The colour is light brown. It has a shade that is frequently admired. No objection can be taken to the precise form of the ring described.

OZOKERIT.—For infants' socks, use Berlin wool; for the socks of children of larger growth, use Welsh yarn. The latter substance has lately been introduced into the market and is much esteemed.

J. J. (Stirling).—The handwriting is very good. There is a book called "Fistiana," which will probably answer your purpose. It can be obtained by order through any bookseller.

T. M. M.—The incident is highly poetical, and calculated to awaken very deep feeling. We cannot say that your verses on the subject commend themselves to our judgment.

A. B. P.—The "feast of fools" was suppressed by the parliament of Dijon in 1553. It was a festival anciently celebrated in different churches and monasteries of France, from an early period, upon New Year's Day, when every kind of absurdity was committed.

F. J. H.—The literature of England is considered to be as rich in poetry as any other literature of ancient or modern times. German literature, though it can boast of many works of poetry, may have some pretensions to us with in this respect, but could not surpass us.

W. J.—The Prussians were defeated at the battle of Jena, which was fought on the 14th October, 1806. The loss on both sides amounted to 34,000. After his victory Napoleon advanced to Berlin, and there issued the famous Berlin decree against the commerce of England, which is dated November 20, 1806.

F. G.—The cost of an ordinary marriage licence is about fifty shillings. The fee for a marriage before a Registrar, without religious ceremony, is much less. If you elect the latter method, you must give three weeks' notice to the Registrar of Marriages for the district in which you reside.

L. G. U.—The musical instrument called the guitar is very great antiquity. The terms *Cittern* and *Gittern*, used by the old English poets, signify the same instrument. The modern guitar has six strings, three being of silk covered with silvered wire, and three of catgut. The cheapest guitars are made in Germany.

B. T.—If your composition was faultless in its mechanism, which it is not, the rhapsody into which you have allowed yourself to be carried would condemn the verses. There is, of course, no objection to your admiration of the insect; you might often sing "I'd be a butterfly;" but to suppose that the pretty moth would "haunt the ambition of a king" is too far-fetched.

ALFRED.—The chances of war are against the besieged. Elaborate calculations have been made to prove that however strong a place may be, if it be scientifically invested and bombarded, it must fail in time. Numerous facts support this view. The true hope of a besieged city is in a friendly army outside its walls marching to its relief.

FRANC C.—You have made a mistake in thinking that a coquette would place much value upon your love, or upon the exertions which were the effect of that love. She was pleased with your admiration as long as it was new

to her, but a succession of admirers is almost as necessary to the fascinating creature as the air she breathes. She smiles at your vanity, which supposed you were able perpetually to minister to her pleasures and necessities.

FORMER.—France has many fine forests, but is surpassed in this respect by Germany, which is so well wooded that the forests there are estimated to cover about one-third of the whole surface of the country. Germany again is surpassed by Russia, which is more abundantly supplied with timber than any other country in Europe.

LAURA.—The attentions do not appear to be those of a lover. Your description, however, may not do him justice. Can you not judge from the tone of his voice, or the expression of his eye, or the pressure of his hand, or the numerous little ways by which love is manifested? Surely you can tell. We suspect you know he loves you, or you would not have written; at the same time, we must give a plain answer to your literal question, and say that the deportment as detailed by you is consistent with ordinary politeness merely.

MARINA.—From the wording of your letter it is difficult to determine whether you wish to leave your civil or military employment. You cannot quit the latter until the time has expired for which you agreed to serve. If you only require a short absence from your civil duties, you might, under the circumstances, be able to make some arrangement with your employer by which you could return to his employment in a specified time. In reply to your second question—No.

E. S.—The following is the receipt for Chatnue: Half-a-pound of mustard, six ounces of garlic, three ounces of cayenne pepper, a pint of sour gooseberries boiled in a pint of vinegar, half-a-pound of salt, half-a-pound of stoned raisins, half-a-pound of brown sugar. Well bruise the garlic, and well mix the whole together, adding during the mixture additional vinegar to the extent of about a quart. When placed in jars or bottles, let the covering be such as will completely exclude the air.

SELF-OPIINION.

After a careful, thoughtful search
Of mental things within,
A good opinion of one's self
Can surely be no sin!
For, should we overrate ourselves,
Or gain a dizzy height,
Conscience, that faithful monitor,
Will set the matter right.

One seldom sees an honest man,
Who does the best he can,
Though humble before God, abject
Before his fellow man.
By virtue of his birthright, he,
Though poor in worldly pelf,
May dare assert, with head erect,
The rights and claims of self.

Then let us call it not conceit,
Though to the world contempt,
Man's good opinion of himself,
Who knows himself the best.
Should vice or crime, with iron grip,
Ever hold his heart in thrall,
So-called "Conceit" will soon take wings,
And "Pride" inglorious fall! M. A. K.

ESTELLE.—There can be no objection to a widow taking a second husband after the lapse of three years from her first husband's death. As to the difference in intensity between the second love and the first love it is difficult to form an opinion. We are rather inclined to disbelieve in second love, and to adopt the view that each of us can love but once. For all this, the second husband may be the fortunate man, for it sometimes takes even a woman a long time to find out what it is to love truly.

V. E.—You would do a very bold thing to accept a lover who does not propose to marry you until five years have elapsed. Almost as many months will suffice for your courtship, and as to the ways and means, there is no certainty that he will be in a better position than that now. There is often a great deal of cruelty in these long engagements, and we never can perceive how a grain of comfort is to be extracted from them. Of course, we cannot gauge the extent of your affection for him; we consider, however, that it will be imprudent to enter into the idea of a union.

MARY.—Your letter is remarkable for its naivete. Perhaps, if you had been aware that the symptoms which you have detailed are all indicative of a very common but very ugly habit, your communication would have been less frank. To a disposition apparently naturally indolent, you have added a larger share of that quality by dreaming about impossibilities. Get rid of the phantoms you have created at once. They are delusions, luring you to unrest and unhappiness. Industry will befriend you. Dreaming will prove your ruin. Earn as many cottages as you can, but build no more "castles in the air."

JAMES N.—If you consider that society has no advantages to bestow commensurate with the sacrifices which its duties entail upon you, that, perhaps, may justify the secluded life which you seem resolved to lead. We think, however, that you have entered upon a hazardous experiment, and have taken an extreme view of the circumstances. To be over-much alone, even in the midst of your favourite books, is scarcely consistent with a healthy tone of mind. We have no opinion of the wisdom of hermits. If there is truth in your idea that you can be of no use or comfort to your fellows, and so forth, you must remember that, at least, you can get from them a little of that cheerfulness of which you seem so greatly in need.

B. A. Z.—It is necessary for you to "draw the line" somewhere; usually, to be able to see a few months ahead is considered sufficient. To act without any attempt at foresight is as unwise as is the desire to peep a long way into the vista of the future. Beware of prophets, and of analogies. Hope, but hope rationally, that is hope because of effort, avoiding strenuously Micawber's idea that something will "turn up." You must not imagine that we endorse your undertaking. Our reply is to the last part of your letter merely.

S. G. S.—A passion, whether it be of love, or glory, or revenge, will doubtless impart great strength for the accomplishment of a given purpose. Yet it is to be doubted whether the strength which is based upon passion is as strong as the strength which arises out of a conscientious sense of duty. The latter is certainly more persistent and permanent, but the fury of the former is great. In the vehemence of its torrent, it frequently carries all before it. It is, however, blind; and duty, with a clear perception and coolness of judgment, is frequently more than a match for rage.

LUCY.—You should endeavour to obtain another interview, and during it exert your wits to find out whether you judged him truly on the occasion that he left you so abruptly. Bashfulness is certainly a bad sign, but it proceeds from such various causes that its possessor may, in the first instance, be regarded with some leniency. He may have been surprised at your entrance; may have been ashamed of giving you trouble, and may have felt in need of some formal introduction. It is hardly fair to be angry because he did not salute you at the church porch. To the lady belongs the privilege of acknowledging such an acquaintance, and as you made no sign, he, of course, would not presume.

P. T.—With a good horse you could easily accomplish a journey of 300 miles in a fortnight. The pace should be about twenty-five miles a day, omitting Sunday, when you should rest, and the daily work should be done in two stages. An infantry soldier on the march is not expected to get over more than fifteen miles a day. He has some weight to carry, and should always be kept in condition to meet the enemy. Staggers in a horse is an inflammation of the brain often produced by over-exertion.

EVA, seventeen, tall. Respondent must be a dark young gentleman, not under twenty.

ESTHER, middle-aged, tall, fair complexion, dark hair and eyes, fond of society, and has an income. Respondent should be a builder in a good position.

LIZZIE, eighteen, 5ft. 1in, dark hair and eyes, good tempered, and fond of home. Respondent must be dark, young, and affectionate.

HOPKIN, dark hair and eyes, would be glad to hear from "J. C." she has a loving heart and industrious hands.

MAGGIE J., nineteen, medium height, fair complexion, hazel eyes. Respondent must be dark and a teetotaler; a carpenter preferred.

JESSIE L., twenty, tall, dark hair, black eyes, and good looking. Respondent must be dark, and a teetotaler; a seaman preferred.

MARY, seventeen, fair, golden hair, blue eyes, regular features, a nice figure, can play the piano, is domesticated, and amiable. Respondent must be tall and nice looking; an officer in the Navy preferred.

LAURA and ALICE—"Laura" hazel eyes, dark hair, good set of teeth, fond of society, accomplished in singing and dancing. "Alice" blue eyes, golden hair, tall, with a good income. Respondents must be tradesmen.

EDWARD and CHARLES, "Edward," twenty-three, 5ft. 8in., dark complexion. "Charles," eighteen, 5ft. 8in., fair, and good looking. Both are clerks. Respondents must reside in London or the suburbs.

JOHN A., twenty-four, medium height, a total abstainer, and will come into possession of a few hundreds. Respondent must not be over twenty-two, and dark; a Catholic preferred.

KATE T. and LIZZIE M.—"Kate T." twenty-two, 5ft. 1in. brown hair, gray eyes, loving and domesticated. "Lizzie M." seventeen, short, fair, auburn hair, brown eyes, pretty, and loving. Respondents must be about twenty-five, of gentlemanly appearance, tall, with fair prospects, and residents of Birmingham.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

J. C. is responded to by—"A. M.", twenty-five, rather stout, light complexion, amiable, and domesticated: a Roman Catholic of good connections.

W. A. S. by—"Isabel," seventeen, medium height, fair, and good tempered.

CHARLIE W. by—"Jennie," twenty, light hair, dark, hazel eyes, domesticated, cheerful, and loving; wishes for Charlie's car's and an appointment.

K. S. by—"J. P." twenty-one, 5ft. 2in., dark brown hair and eyes, fair complexion, domesticated, and cheerful.

HARRY F. and CHARLIE W. by—"Jessie," twenty, dark hair, eyes, cheerful, and domesticated.

CHARLEY E. and CHARLINE W. by—"H. M. D." and "M. E. L." H. M. D. seventeen, medium height, fair, brown hair, grey eyes, a good figure, loving, and domesticated. M. E. L. eighteen, medium height, brown hair and eyes, loving and cheerful.

LILIAN FER by—"T. B. S." nineteen, 5ft. 10in., with good expectations. Would be glad to exchange car's.

VIOLET by—"A. B. H." twenty-six, tall, fair, an excellent companion, gentlemanly, musical, and well connected; and—"G. T." tall, good looking, cheerful, fond of home, and in a good position as a tradesman.

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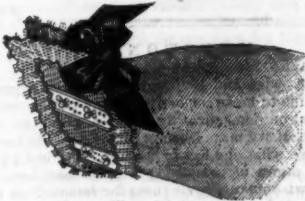
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N. B.—CORRESPONDENTS MUST ADDRESS THEIR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OF "THE LONDON READER," 334, STRAND, W.C.

†† We cannot undertake to return Rejected Manuscripts. As they are sent to us voluntarily, authors should retain copies.

SLEEVE, CHEMISSETTE, WATCH STAND, LACE BORDER, &c., &c.

CHEMISSETTE AND SLEEVE.—Nos. 1 & 2.
This pretty chemisette is made of net, net lappets



SLEEVE.—No. 1.

are laid on, trimmed with lace and insertion. Pink satin bow. The sleeve is the same, opened where the bow is placed.

WATCH-STAND WITH EMBROIDERY.
Nos. 3 & 4.

The foundation of this watch-stand is of cardboard, twenty-three inches long and ten broad, and shaped according to illustration. The cardboard is covered with light brown satin, previously wadded and quilted. The outer edge is bound with strips of brown. Then add gold and silk cord. For the pocket, cut cardboard according to illustration. Cover one side with brown sarcenet, and the other with satin of the same colour. The sarcenet forms the outside, and receives the embroidery in fine brown silk cord. A strip of satin on the bias borders the pocket. This is sewn on with embroidery stitch, which is finished off with gold beads. On the wrong side the watch-stand is covered with brown sarcenet.

BORDER FOR SACHET.—No. 5.

In our last number, we gave a very pretty sachet, and we give this week the lace border in



WATCH-STAND.—No. 4.

full size. Illustration 5 shows the pattern of the border the actual size. Work green chenille in cross-stitch, and let the squares on the bias be seen through the tulle. Narrow white velvet ribbon is used to divide, or rather, to ornament the divisions of the compart-

ments. Fine black chenille borders the white velvet; gold thread, in embroidery stitch, forms the pleasing effect shown in the illustration; and this is, in its turn, edged with black chenille.

HABIT SHIRTS, JACKETS, ETC.

EMBROIDERED habit-shirts of black or white cashmere, with silk skirts, are pretty for breakfast and chamber toilettes at the seaside hotels. These are merely Garibaldi waists, with the fulness in box-pleats stitched down flatly from the shoulder-seam to the waist. There are four pleats in the back and two in each front, with a broader fold in the centre. Each pleat is covered with embroidery in brightest colours, or with pure white alone; the latter is most fashionable. There is no belt, but a drawing-string is at the back, with flaps all round to pass beneath the dress skirt. Coat-sleeves, and a narrow standing band around the neck. These shirts are shown in all colours, but those of white and black are most tasteful.

For ladies who do not require much warmth, écrù linen waists are made in the same manner and worn with black silk skirts. The pleats are merely run together and pressed flatly, without being stitched down at the edges. After they are ironed the laun-

Sailor hats always prevail to some extent on the beach. They are made with rather taller crowns this season, and a flower cluster or a feather tuft at the side is added to the ribbon scarf usually tied around the crown. Donna Maria gauze, either blue



CHEMISSETTE.—No. 2.

or brown, is twined around the crowns of other hats, and a long end is left streaming, to use as a veil, or as a scarf for the neck.

Umbrellas for the seaside are large, canopy-shaped, and made of buff or white pongee, with stout bamboo handles, finished with a silver plating at each end, so that the handle

may be used as a staff in walking.

Still newer than these are maroon and prune-blue umbrellas, with thick handles covered with Russian leather.

FASHIONS.

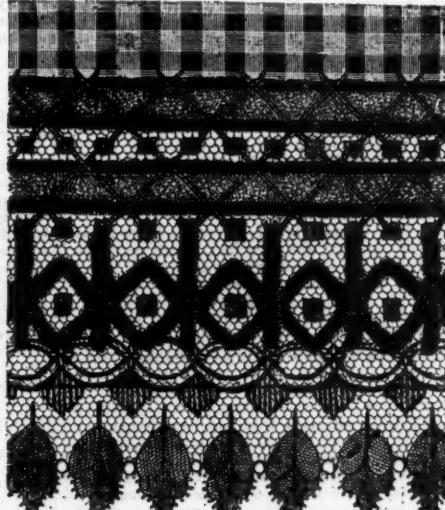
In looking over the largest stock of silks we discover that what the French call "high novelties" are passé, as all silks of the best grades are in self-colours, the aim being to obtain a sheet of perfect colour and a surface of pure lustre rather than to carry out a pattern of elaborate design. Soft poult de soie and richest gros grains for day dresses are in the grave, dark shades, that merchants call cloth-colours, while those



SHOWING PART OF WATCH-STAND
IN FULL SIZE.—No. 3.

dress should "raise" the pleats with a wooden knife. Coat-sleeves with broad, square cuffs. A turned-over collar, and tiny white buttons down the front. Very narrow écrù guipure edges the collar and cuffs, or else they are needle-worked in small scallops or saw-teeth. Waists of white linen with clearly defined stripes of scarlet, blue, or black, at intervals of an inch, are shaped like plain blouses without pleats or a belt. The belt of the dress skirt with which they are worn holds them in place. Loose coat-sleeves gathered into a broad, straight wristband that buttons on the outer side of the arm. Straight, turned-over collar. These waists are cool and comfortable for morning wear, and are often seen in the street with black silk skirts and a lace mantle, or else a sacque of black cashmere. These are white, with black spots, and a border made of an inch width of percale, in gay Roman colours.

Bedouins and burnous are losing favour. Seaside wraps take the jacket shape. Loose jackets of white or black cashmere, almost covered with embroidery in perpendicular bands, are worn for cool mornings. The needlework is in coloured silks, or simply in white, as fancy dictates. Buff and white cashmere jackets are embroidered and braided with scarlet or brown silks. Jaunty little yachting jackets are of cloth as light and soft as flannel. They are either blue or white. If the jacket is blue, the square collar and cuffs are white; if it is a white jacket, there are blue revers at the neck and wrists.



LACE BORDER OF SACHET.—No. 5.

(Given in last week's number.)

for evening toilettes are of pale, faint tints, scarcely tangible enough to be described.

Brown, gray, mode, and fawn colours prevail; and French ingenuity is displayed in the names given every variation of shade. Four different tints, marked cigar browns, and appropriately called Manila, Londres, Cabanas, and Figaro, increase in colour from light to dark in the order in which they are named here. The noisettes or nut browns are in three shades, of which the chestnut, it is said, will be the favourite colour of the winter.

TOO LATE.

IT was a cold, raw, cheerless day in the early spring—a day with a dark and clouded sky, and great rain drops falling like heavy tears upon the sodden snow. A dismal day for a funeral, for surely it is better to lay our loved ones in the grave while the bright sun shines and the birds sing, and the Heaven to which they have gone is bright and clear and blue. There were many who looked up with a shiver at those brooding clouds, as the procession began to form before the open doors of Margaret Seaford's home. Old friends and neighbours were there, who had known her as a little toddling child—who had watched her as a careless maiden—who had consoled and pitied her—yes, pitied her as a mother and a wife! For over and over again had an infant been laid upon that gentle breast only to be snatched away just as it was blooming into intelligence and beauty; and he who should have enabled her to bear such trials meekly, by his devotion and his love, had been but a cold and careless husband in the main. He had never openly wronged, had never abused or ill-treated her. No one could point to an overt act of unkindness or infidelity on his part. But he was busy and a successful man, engrossed in his gigantic schemes of speculation, and so absorbed by his business and his plans for its advancement as to have little leisure or inclination for that pleasant home intimacy with which other and wiser men take time to embellish and brighten their lives. Home to this man had been a place to eat, drink, and sleep in—a house for which taxes were to be paid, and which must be beautified and adorned outwardly and inwardly, so far as money and taste could accomplish it. And he bought new dresses for his wife as often as she needed them; he gave her furs and jewels and silk attire; he gave her everything, in fact, but those two things for which she pined—his attention and his love. For years she had envied the commonest labourer's wife who might pass the house leaning fondly on her husband's arm, discussing with him the way to make three shillings do the work of five. For years she had done her duty faithfully, with the hope of its reward on earth growing less and less bright before her. Now she had gone to seek that reward in Heaven. And the happy matrons who had been her playmates and companions years before glanced pityingly down upon the pale, patient face, and with a feeling of inward resentment turned from the stately, dark-haired, dark-eyed man who sat with folded arms and compressed lips in silence.

"Not one tear did he shed, even when she was lowered into the grave. I stood close beside him and watched him all the time," said Mrs. Grundy to her friends that evening. "Oh, it was a hard, sad life for that poor thing, and I only hope and pray that he may take another wife who will wring his heart as hard and as long as he has wrung hers!"

"But surely he must have loved his wife once, in the early days of their marriage," said a pitiful young girl.

"Ay—it was a love match, if that was all," said Mrs. Grundy, with a sage nod of the head.

"You can see now, my dear, how they turn out! Stephen Seaford wasted his wife long before her beauty began to fade, and he has gone on, growing more and more tired year by year; and this is the end! I have no doubt that in his heart, he is thoroughly glad that she is gone!"

Was Mrs. Grundy right? Was it all true, that dreary sermon that she preached above the grave where the broken-hearted wife was lying? Let us pay a visit to the home of the widower and see.

It was six months after the death, and the soil upon that grave were green. The house still kept its tasteful beauty and nice order, for the lady who presided there was ambitious in her turn, and secretly intended to make herself so indispensable to its master that he, in time, would gladly select her to fill the vacant place in heart and home. He missed no comfort, no attention that had been his in the olden time. He only missed his wife! Mrs. Grundy would never have believed it of him! He sat in the little room that had been peculiarly her own, leaning his head upon her writing-desk, and sobbing as if his heart would break. The door was locked, and no one could intrude upon his grief. His wife's picture, taken just after her marriage, smiled gently down upon him from the wall. Her desk was open, and he had been looking over the letters and papers she had left behind. He had intended to destroy them, but his hand was stayed. There, tied with rose-coloured ribbon, were the letters he had written to her when he sought to win her for his bride. How fond they were, how tender, how full of promises for the future towards which they looked, with love and hope, together! How had he fulfilled those promises, how had he kept those vows? Heavens! In those days he had been glad to kneel at her feet

kiss the hem of her dress, the ground on which her tender foot had trod! How had it been with him, in the later years, when she was all his own! How! The tear-stained pages of her journal, with its little hopeless, loving daily entries, answered him only too well:

"Stephen is no longer happy with me; he loves me no longer. Alas, I can see it so plainly, and he never knows that he betrays it—never dreams that my heart is aching and yearning for one of the looks, the words, the kisses of the dear old time! And yet I love him—oh, I love him a thousand times better than when we were engaged! He is so noble, so many, so handsome, so far above all others that I see! Why, why has he ceased to care for me, while he is still dearer than all the world to me?"

And again:

"Little Susy, my last darling child, was taken from us to-day. Her father grieves, but oh, he does not grieve with me! Childless and unloved, oh, how can I bear all the long and weary years that may be between me and my grave!"

And again:

"The doctor has told me this day that I have not long to live. I made him tell me. He hesitated; he feared that it would have a bad effect on me, weak and low as I am. Ah, how little he knows! For the first time in long years I see a ray of light before me. I go, while Stephen is yet a handsome man, in the prime and vigour of life. Some other woman will win his heart, and his home may yet be happy. I shall no longer be a burden and a clog in his path; but, oh, Stephen, Stephen, my darling husband, what woman can ever love you better than I—or who can ever—"

There the pen had dropped from the dying hand, and a blot had fallen! They were the last words she had ever penned, and they were a prayer of thanksgiving on his account, because she was about to be taken from him! Who loved him now like this?—that coldly elegant woman, sitting at her work in Margaret's parlour, and calculating in her vain heart the chances of succeeding to Margaret's vacant place? Oh, no—no! Many a woman would be glad to marry him for the sake of his vast wealth, but no other heart would ever cherish and cling to him, in spite of his indifference and his faults, as this fond heart had done that was now silent in the grave!

"Oh, Margaret, if I had known this! If you had only spoken—if you could but come back to me!" he groaned. "And now—now it is for ever too late!"

Yes—for him it was "too late," and nothing could recall the past!

But oh, careless and indifferent husband, with no kind word or kiss of welcome for the pale wife whom, after all, you really love, the hearse and the train of mourners stand not yet at the door of your home! It is not yet "too late" for you to repent and make amends, and so save your heart such pangs of remorse as this proud man was forced to endure.

M. W. S. G.

THE ARMY.—From Aldershot we are told that the 20,000 men voted by Parliament will soon be obtained.

THE MARYPORT ROMAN ALTARS.—It was believed that the red sandstones of which these altars were composed was got from the rock at Maryport, close to the side of the old Roman station; but a working miner, named Hodgson, has discovered that they must have come from an ancient quarry at Sheep Field, on the Allerby Hall estate, Aspatria. The stone is said to be identical, which is not the case with that at Maryport. The quarry was an extensive one, and the remains of ancient tools have been found.

THE CRYPT AT ALDGATE.—The houses at the end of the block separating Leadenhall Street and Fenchurch Street have been pulled down to widen the entrance to both these thoroughfares, and a very considerable improvement has been effected. Underneath one of these houses, however, and just opposite Aldgate Pump, was an ancient crypt, the vaulting of this being found insecure and, as we understand, too high to suit the level of the new pavement, it was taken off, and the crypt has been filled in—in fact, to all intents and purposes, obliterated. This is very much to be regretted: it was an historical landmark, a vestige of ancient London, and of value for more reasons than one. However, it is of no use repining, still less finding fault; the past must yield to the present: onwards is the word, and onward we must go.

AN AMAZONIAN CORPS.—A curious incident of the war reaches us from Berlin. A young German lady, the Franklin Minna Hause, issued an appeal to the young women of Germany, urging them to form a corps of Amazon volunteers. Fifty-three young ladies having responded to the appeal, Minna offered their services to General Von Falkenstein, Governor of Hanover. That sage officer replied

that he regretted he could not avail himself of their services, but that they might make themselves useful in attending to the wounded troops. This did not, however, suit Minna, who issued an order of the day disbanding the corps on the ground that the great victories of the German armies rendered their services unnecessary.

MONOTONY.

NATURE, wise and loving nature, takes a great deal of pains to make us feel at home in this world. She is bent on domesticating us for a season on the earth, so that we may learn what she has to teach, and acquire what she has to bestow. And in all this she is the organ of something higher than herself; even of a wisdom and lovingness far remote from the immediate ends of present life. To get her purpose carried out, which is simply equivalent to having her work done, nature must needs habituate us to a certain routine. The same things must be often repeated, the same acts, the same joys and sorrows, the same duties and experiences; and, since these are fundamental to our being, on no account can any serious breach be allowed in them.

We rebel against this-beautiful order. We resist its steady requirements. We call them exactions, and fight bitterly against their supposed tyranny. If we can find or make an opportunity to interrupt this fixed continuance of things, that act like a dead drag upon our faculties we are glad enough to vent our dissatisfaction and enjoy a little variety, even though it be a fraud upon our better nature. The changeable succession of everyday tasks—the wearisome personality of trifles; the monotonous round of petty acts; weeks, months, years, wearing the same heavy aspect, how hard it is to the buoyant and elastic spirit that would fain burst away and be a fresher and fairer self! In such moods we little think what we should lose, how dearly we should pay for our fancied freedom, and how eager we should be to return to the old monotony, as the true foundation of all strength and virtue. The most of our social and moral laws act like gravitation—indeed, they are gravitation in another form, operating to keep us fixed under an order of circumstances by which it becomes difficult to emerge from ignorance and imbecility into something like manhood.

A dreary repetition, is it? Scenes and movements unvaried, details clinging tenaciously to every hour, each day a resurrection of yesterday, the weary tomorrow awaiting our advance with the same old and familiar face, novelty worn out long ago—it is all so, and it is all so ordained. But why? Only to lessen our pains and increase our pleasures. This same monotony is a gracious thing for us, since under any other arrangement life would be but a series of silly flirtings from one object to another—mere shuttlecock flung from the vanity of to-day to the idler vanity of to-morrow. Within the compass of this monotony we have quite as much alteration as we can safely bear—enough for our hopes, and often too much for our fears. Despite of the uniformity, how many of our dearest treasures are hugged to our hearts with undissembled dread, lest the accidents which so frequently occur should tear them away? Had we less regularity, we should be victims of constant apprehension, which, so far from tending to make us more morally thoughtful, would only serve to stupefy the intellect and deaden all virtuous sensibilities. The inhabitants of volcanic regions, who hold their homes and lives on a most uncertain tenure, are usually less considerate of duty and more eager for transient pleasure than those who live amidst scenes less exposed to violent disturbance. And so, too, if less monotony prevailed, the imagination would grow frantic with the excitements of novelty, and the affections find no resting-place for their hopes and aspirations.

The world is organised to suit us as we are, and to develop us according to the intention of Providence. It gives us all we need, all the power we can use, all the happiness we can enjoy; and, further than this, it addresses the infinite and the everlasting in our nature, transcending our capacity of attainment, and outreaching even our vast desires. No man ever lived up to the measure of its true possibilities. It is a habitation much too large, much too glorious for its tenant. If used, and not abused—if used agreeably to Divine intent, and not perverted to sense and sensuality—no one can ever complain of weariness and ennui; for every day is a new day, and every hour brings some beauty or joy never known and felt before.

H. B.

PEOPLE should mind how they express themselves at public dinners. We read, the other day, that the builder of a church now in course of erection in South London, when the toast of his health was

given, rather enigmatically replied that he was "more fitted for the scaffold than for public speaking."

FACETIA.

A DILEMMA FOR ENGAGED LADIES.—A lady says engagements are very unsatisfactory sort of affairs, if you are afraid to be polite and attentive, the gentleman thinks you do not care for him, and you are afraid to be polite for fear the engagement might some time be broken off, when you would be sorry to think you had wasted so much sweetness on some other woman's husband.

A DUBIOUS COMPLIMENT.—A farmer wrote as follows to a distinguished scientific agriculturist to whom he felt under obligations for introducing a variety of swine.—"Respected Sir,—I went yesterday to the cattle show. I found several pigs of your species. There was a great variety of hogs, and I was astonished at not seeing you there."

DELICATE DIET.—A physician, after listening with torture to a pressing account of "symptoms" from a lady, who ailed so little that she was going to the opera that evening, happily escaped from the room, when he was urgently requested to step upstairs again; it was to ask him whether she might eat some oysters. "Yes, madam," said the physician, "shells and all."

NOT A HUXLEYITE.—A greenhorn went to a menagerie, where an orang-outang particularly struck his attention. Several gentlemen were conversing about the animal, one of whom expressed the opinion that it was a lower order of the human species. The countryman did not like this idea, and striding up to the gentleman, expressed his contempt for it thus: "Pooh, pooh! he's no more human species than I be."

AN ANSWER REQUESTED.—Lord Derby, speaking with his accustomed force, at Blackpool, told his audience, *a propos* of the Volunteer movement, that "there was a wonderful number of people in this country who have got time on their hands, and more of it, very often, than was good for them." Is it the knowledge of the latter fact which induces so many of them to do their very utmost to kill it?—*Judy.*

"MADAM, you said your son was a lawyer; has he much practice?" "Why, yes, sir, he has a great practice—of smoking cigars."

THERE is a bashful bachelor who dares not meet ladies in the streets. He says they wear so many bugles on their dresses that he fears overtures from them.

A CAPITAL ANSWER.

"Self-made" Man (examining School, of which he is Manager): "Now, boy, what's the capital of Holland?"

Boy: "An 'H,' sir."—*Punch.*

ANIMAL WATERS.

There is something well worth seeing and tasting in America just now. Tourists, warred out from Baden and Homburg, may be glad to know that: "A hot spring has been discovered in Nevada, from which flows, if not chicken soup, something so like it, when properly seasoned with pepper and salt, as to make it impossible to tell one from the other. Three pounds of beef boiled in the water of this spring will yield as much broth as twelve pounds boiled in ordinary water. Nor is its usefulness confined to this, for it has been discovered to possess a property, not found, we believe, in either chicken soup, of perpetuating itself, so to speak, by hatching out the eggs of its chief constituent."

How delightful in all this! an ever-flowing, natural tureen of chicken broth! Patients only required to bring their own pepper and salt. Nutritious beef-tea and fresh-boiled eggs on the premises. We are not told who had the distinction of first discovering these invaluable culinary waters, but he must have been a broth of a hoy. Around them we can picture a handsome city already springing up, to be known far and wide as Chickenbad. Soon, too, there will be seen in our own shop-windows an announcement of Bottled Chicken-Soup, newly imported from America.

A friend, whose weak point is certainly not credulity, observes that he has a suspicion, just a *suspicion*, that the whole thing may turn out a hoax, and that, fond as he is of adventure and novelty, he does not intend to go out to Nevada, on such a chicken-hazardous expedition.—*Punch.*

IN FORMA PAUPERIS.

Young Hopeful (to papa, who is sending off his beloved belongings to the sea-side): "Look here, pa. (Holding up fourpenny piece.)

Paterfamilias: "What now?"

Young Hopeful: "What cobbler's implement does this represent, 'pa'?"

Paterfamilias (impatiently): "Asking riddles now!" (Persevering, and forked out.) "Oh, that's your all, is it? There! Now will you please to be off!"—*Punch.*

READY? EH? READY?—Forewarned is not forearmed, or the volunteers would be now practising with breechloaders. Catch a weasel asleep, and pop

goes the weasel. Pop also goes the volunteer. He might as well go pop with a pop-gum.—*Punch.*

DOUBLE OR QUOTIS.

This is not quite fair to the girl:

"There is said to be a man in Providence who has a handsome daughter, and who, whenever a lover applies for the girl's hand, insists on his pitching a game of quoits with him, and if he (the lover) beats, he shall have a chance to court the girl. Up to this time, the old man has beat every comer."

We are afraid the old gentleman is so desirous of winning that he won't give his daughter a chance of a match. At anyrate, if any one does beat the governor, he will win a game bride.—*Fun.*

NOT SO VERY STRANGE.

There is nothing very remarkable about this:

"On Sunday, in Fort Street, Douglas, Isle of Man, the wife of Thomas Murphy gave birth to three children. The father of the children is a diver employed at the new landing pier."

Naturally as the man was a diver, he might be expected to become the father of divers children.—*Fun.*

A WARNING.

DON'T marry an old man, Pearlita;

Don't wed your bright youth with his age—

The gloom of his many long winters

Will darken your life's summer page.

Don't marry an old man, Pearlita;

I'm only your old nurse, 'tis true,

But my heart has learned wisdom through loving,

And all of its love is for you.

How can I be silent, Pearlita,

When the child I have loved and caressed

Throws her heart, with its treasure of feeling,

To be chilled upon winter's cold breast?

You are fair as a flower, Pearlita,

Gem-crowned with the dew of the dawn;

But you know, dear, such flowers will perish

When the shades of night draw on!

You say that you love him, Pearlita,

You can lean on his strength and grow strong,

You are willing to bloom near his bleakness,

To brighten his life with your song!

Ah, my poor, little foolish Pearlita!

How little you know what you say—

Would this earth have its song-birds and blossoms

If December should follow th' May?

You say that he loves you so truly,

That his words are so noble and grand;

That he'll be both the father and lover!

'Twill be sweet to obey on command!

Take this lesson to heart, my Pearlita,

And fling all this folly away—

The rose may not wed with the snowflake,

Nor December weave garlands for May.

B. H.

GEMS.

THE irresolute seize with eagerness all overtures which show them two roads, and which, in consequence, do not press them to choose.

If a man only takes sleep and exercise enough, he can work his brains as hard as he requires.

Most of the noblest dispositions think themselves happiest when others share their happiness with them.

In human life it would seem as if suffering ought not to have been a part of the earthly course, but experience shows exactly another thing. If anything can be shown by the indications and facts of nature, it is, that man never grows to a full man's estate without a certain degree of ministration of suffering; and that suffering is a part of nature, or it could not be universal everywhere, always having infallible signs and tokens of universality.

If one should give me a dish of sand, and tell me there were particles of iron in it, I might look for them with my clumsy fingers, and be unable to detect them; but let me take a magnet and sweep through it, and how it would draw to itself the most invisible particles by the mere power of attraction! The unthankful heart, like my finger in the sand, discovers no real mercies; but let the thankful heart sweep through the day, as the magnet finds the iron, so it will find in every hour some heavenly blessing.

THE windmill at Cressy, from which Edward III. watched the progress of the battle in which his son, the Black Prince, won his spurs on the 26th August, 1346, has had a narrow escape of being utterly destroyed. This mill has been for some time in the occupation of a tanner, who employed the machinery to grind bark. On Monday night, the 15th ult.,

this mill was discovered to be on fire, and though the inhabitants of Cressy were quickly on the spot, all aid was vain, and the whole was burnt save the old stone tower, which still stands.

STATISTICS.

RELIGIOUS EDIFICES IN SCOTLAND.—The population of Scotland is about 3,300,000, of whom 500,000 "decline to be classified, or ecclesiasticised in any way." Among these are the Moravians, Irvingites, and Primitive Methodists. Making this reduction, it appears that there is in Scotland one church for about 525 of all persons of fit age to attend—a larger supply, it is said, than exists in any other part of the world, except the Papal States and the City of London.

THE imports of Australian gold into the United Kingdom this year "show some tendency to decline." In June these imports amounted to 485,452L, as compared with 818,422L in June, 1869, and 503,778L in June, 1868. In the six months ending June 30, this year, the aggregate receipts of Australian gold amounted to 3,115,356L, against 3,367,650L in the corresponding period of 1869, and 3,203,940L in the corresponding period of 1868. The expression, "Australian gold," comprises also gold from New Zealand.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE Marquis of Bute has just been proved heir to the Earldom of March.

M. LESSER is gazetted as Honorary Grand Commander of the Star of India.

A NUMBER of French racehorses have arrived at Newmarket in consequence of the war.

M. OPENHEIM, the wealthy Cologne banker, is familiarly known in Paris circles as O de Cologne.

A LETTER from Châlons says the emperor is altered to a degree one could not imagine possible. Besides being aged, he looks blotchy and puffy, and withal quite impotent and helpless.

M. GANDIN, of the Bureau de Longitudes, says he has invented a machine which will throw a million of projectiles at once, so as to kill at 1,500 metres, and to injure seriously at 3,000.

THE magnificent and costly jewels of the Princess Clotilde, wife of Prince Napoleon, recently arrived at Dover from Calais and Paris, and were forwarded on to London.

IMPOSTORS, who pretend to have lost limbs in some of the recent battles on the Continent, have already made their appearance in the streets of London.

THE military career of the King of Prussia extends over 55 years. His Majesty, who was born in 1797, was present at the battle of Waterloo, and was then but 18 years of age.

A HANDSOME silver candelabrum has been subscribed for by officers of the Indian army for presentation to their champion in the House of Commons, Colonel Sykes, M.P. for the city of Aberdeen.

THE number of German boys, aged from 12 to 16, who are missed since the outbreak of the war is said to exceed several hundreds. Forty of these are missed in Berlin only. They are supposed to have gone to the seat of war.

BARON ADOLPHE ROTHSCHILD has left Paris for Geneva. His residence in the Rue Monceau is empty, the whole of his valuable having been despatched to London. Opulence combined with prudence.

SOME very rich quartz reefs have been discovered at Diamond Creek, about two hours and a half journey from Melbourne. Large quantities of gold are being extracted, and much money is being made by some of the lucky adventurers.

THE nuns in the different convents of Paris, with a view to possible disturbances (of which they are in greater dread than of the entrance of the Prussian army), have, we hear, been provided with secular dresses, which they would adopt at the first signal of a revolution.

HARVEST operations are very far advanced in Devon and Cornwall, and the thrashing machine is active in both counties. The reports go to show that wheat will be a fair average yield, while the quality is exceedingly good. Barley and oats are also of excellent quality, but quantity is generally expected to be below the mark. Everywhere there is very little straw.

A SAD INCIDENT OF THE WAR.—The casualties among the inhabitants of Weissenburg during the bombardment were three killed and fifteen wounded; amongst the former a young girl, the acknowledged beauty of the town, a perfectly lovely creature, who was standing at her father's house-door with a younger brother talking to a neighbour, when a shell burst close to the group. One fragment struck her in the body, and another took her brother's hand and wrist off. She died next day in great agony.

No. 3.—GEMS OF MELODY.

[October 1, 1870.]

La Gazza.

GRAND OPERA MARCH.

Arranged from the Score by
Sig. G. CITADINI.

Maestoso.

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